

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, 7th June 2015
Monday, 8th June 2015
Tuesday, 9th June 2015
Wednesday, 10th June 2015
and
Thursday, 11th June 2015**

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**PROCEEDINGS
DAY TWO
(Monday, 8th June 2015)**

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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 8TH JUNE 2015

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order. No meetings at the back! I hope you had a good evening last night. Well done. *(Applause)* It was remiss of me last night not to thank once again our sponsors. I want you to put your hands together for Future Fusion, British Gas, and Pattinson & Brewer. *(Applause)* Thank you. Everybody had a great time, including our speakers. They are all going to the bank to get paid, to get the money out to pay the hotel!

Congress, I remind you that any questions on the balance sheet and auditors' report need to be submitted in writing to the Congress office no later than 5.30 today.

I would now like to call Standing Orders, Helen Johnson, to give SOC Report No.3. Thanks, Helen.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.3

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 H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, withdrawn motions: The SOC has been advised that the following motion has been withdrawn, that is, Motion 336, UK Domestic Gas Industry Under Threat, standing in the name of Southern Region. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.3.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Does Congress accept the report? *(Agreed)* You are in fine voice this morning.

Standing Orders Committee Report No.3 was Carried.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the agenda and I will be calling Motion 135, London Region, 136, Southern Region, and 137, Birmingham Region. I repeat, London Region to move. Where are the skates? Thank you.

THE NOTION OF "SOME OTHER SUBSTANTIAL REASON" (SOSR) MOTION 135

135. THE NOTION OF "SOME OTHER SUBSTANTIAL REASON" (SOSR)

Congress, in 2013 and 2014 the top 25 security companies have shown a range of reasons that justify dismissal under the grounds of some other substantial reason (SOSR), giving extra emphasis to the fact that it is not difficult for employers to establish a potentially fair reason for dismissal. The most common class of cases which arise under SOSR is changes to contract, when you refuse changes you are dismissed under SOSR.

A question which often emerges is the extent to which an employer can change their employee's conditions for the worse, and still justify it as a SOSR. In 2013/14 the top 25 security companies had a good turnover profit, without any financial problems, but the security companies still had a legitimate business need to implement the changes to contract. Hence, it seems that the strength and importance of maintaining an effective business may sometimes override an employee's rights to seek a remedy under unfair dismissal. Employers do, go a long way in justifying the extreme changes to the conditions of their employment under SOSR.

Additionally, under the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations 2006, dismissals in connection with a transfer may constitute SOSR. This formulation has been greatly criticised, in that its vagueness means that almost any reason could qualify, subject only to the qualification that it must be “substantial”.

Congress, calls on the GMB to lobby Government to delete or amend the notion of “some other substantial reason” (SOSR) in order employers fully discharge undertaking and employment rights are fully protected.

GMB LONDON SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. WHEATLEY (London): 2013-2014 the top 25 security companies have shown a range of reasons, or SOSR, for dismissal of employees although many security companies have made good profits. With the Employment Rights Act of 1996 the employer must show good reason to dismiss an employee fairly. However, a great number of companies and businesses, in particular under this Tory regime, use SOSR to dismiss employees. The reasons used by employers to dismiss staff under SOSR are business reorganisation, conflicts of interest, personal clashes, breakdown of trust and confidence, refusal of employee to accept employers’ changes to terms and conditions of contract, and pressures from third parties where a client says, “Unless you remove your member of staff from our premises we may terminate the contract.”

We have a further erosion of employees’ rights even though employers do go a long way in justifying the extreme changes to conditions of their employment under SOSR. Additionally, the Transfer of Undertakings Regulation 2006 covering dismissal in connection with a transfer may constitute SOSR, which is vague by its definition and has been heavily criticised. SOSR has almost any amount of reasons that could qualify or justify dismissal of employees, subject only to the qualification it must be substantial.

Congress, we call on the GMB to lobby this Tory Government to do away with or amend the notion of “some other substantial reason”. Employers should fully undertake that employment rights are fully protected and not eroded further by this Tory regime. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. While the seconder is coming to the platform, can I please ask the movers of Composite 4, Wales & South West Region and Midland & East Coast Region to come forward? Vaughan.

BRO. V. WEST (London): President, Congress, seconding Motion 135. Let me tell you a story that is not about the security industry. This happens elsewhere. We all know that employment law is not a level playing field. We all know that the playing field is tilted well towards the employers’ goals. Over the last five years the Tory-led coalition tilted the playing field even further. But how many of you do know that enshrined in law is this phrase “SOSR” or “some other substantial reason”, where employers can dismiss fairly easily.

Let me tell you a story of one of my members. Working in an academy school clearly there had been a breakdown in the relationship between her and her line manager with grievances and counter-grievances flying back and forth. You would have thought that the way to deal with that would have been for senior management at the academy to have thoroughly investigated the claims and counterclaims to determine the rights and wrongs of both sides but, no, instead of doing that they sided with the line manger and instead of offering mediation which my member would have accepted to try and resolve the situation, they came up with this phrase to me, “We are going to dismiss her for some other substantial reason.”

The same management at around the same time tried to use that as well to avoid redundancy costs of a small reorganisation of some school support staff.

Employment law needs a complete overhaul. The playing field needs to be flattened out. This particular clause in the legislation needs immediate removal. Our members deserve a fair hearing. Our members deserve protection from employers who fail to manage. Our members deserve the protection of a level playing field. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 136, Southern Region.

TUPE REGULATIONS MOTION 136

136. TUPE REGULATIONS

This Congress notes that the TUPE regulations provide a minimum level of protection to employees in the event that their employment is transferred between companies and organisations.

Congress believes that this protection should be extended to circumstances where the majority shareholder of a business changes. This would help protect employees from private equity asset strippers, who take over businesses and then systematically make cuts to employee terms and conditions, to further line their own pockets.

Congress resolves that GMB will make representations, at both a national and European level, to seek a change to the legislation to give further protection to staff in this regard.

We ask Congress to support this Motion.

X99 GMBAA BRANCH
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. A. McNALLY (Southern): Congress, good morning. I am the GMB AA Branch President and Equalities Officer. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) TUPE legislation gives protection to employees in the event their employment transfers to another company. In such circumstances a consultation must take place with a recognised union. The company must specify any intended measures it intends to take and the terms and conditions have a level basic protection from post-transfer harmonisation or other change. Unfortunately, the legislation does not cover situations where the majority shareholder in a company changes.

Many of you will be familiar with the story of the AA and how a private equity bought the shares in the company and then embarked on a mission to slash and burn the terms and conditions in order to increase their profits. Since then we have seen this happen in countless other companies and the Government have failed to legislate because they want to protect the profits of their friends in the City.

The GMB AA Branch believes that the TUPE legislation should be changed to give protection to employees in these circumstances and that the GMB should lobby to bring about this change on a national and European level. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Alan. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. D. LEAK (Southern): Worthy President, Congress, the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment), known as TUPE, is the implementation of the European Union Transfer Directive and is an

important part of labour law to protect employees whose business is being transferred to another business. However, TUPE does not cover the situation where the majority shareholder changes and we think it should. I am asking you to support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Well done. Birmingham?

EMPLOYMENT LAW MOTION 137

137. EMPLOYMENT LAW

This Congress would like the CEC to instruct the relevant bodies to change the inclusion of the terms and wording of employment law with reference to 'reasonable belief'.

In common law the need for 'evidential proof' beyond any reasonable doubt is required to make a judgement. In employment law the 'reasonable belief' can be abused by unscrupulous employers to make judgements contrary to our members' livelihood.

R35 JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. WADRUP (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Rather than getting bogged down with the intricacies of the whole raft of employment law I would like to draw attention to one small part. It is the reference to reasonable belief. An employer does not need any evidential proof as there is in criminal law beyond reasonable doubt to believe that an offence has been committed by an employee. An employer who is trying to determine whether the offence has occurred, such as gross misconduct by theft, or gross negligence has taken place, does not have to establish beyond reasonable doubt that this event took place and the individual they discipline is responsible.

Employers only have to show that they reasonably believe that the offence has occurred. A reasonable belief is arrived at after a robust process has been carried out, which means the individual knows it is them that has been accused, what for, and can comment. The investigation is not tainted, prejudged, or biased. The decision is made by taking into account the individual's explanations and that there is a right of appeal.

It goes without saying that is why one of our members is in trouble. An investigation is usually and can be very amateurish and biased. Whatever our member says is usually dismissed with an amount of disrespect and prejudgement. How often does an appeal change the view of the first decision? For instance, several can be dismissed for an incident of theft if the culprit is not identified after investigation. No one today should be fighting a tribunal on the basis that a member has been found out to be not guilty.

So, let's all get the facts and beliefs, let's make them watertight, not have a reasonable belief that an incident may or may not have happened but must be beyond reasonable doubt. Can you all see how this is wrong and how open to corruption, bias, and abuse this is with social media becoming more and prevalent? I would like on behalf of all our members to let the CEC instruct the relevant bodies to challenge the wording in employment law from reference to "reasonable belief" which is quoted many times during disciplinaries, to "beyond all reasonable doubt". I move. *(Applause)*

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

Motion 137 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call the movers of Composite 4, Wales & South West Region and Midland Region.

COMPOSITE 4

MODERN VOTING METHODS FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION BALLOTS

(Covering Motions 129 and 130)

129. Industrial Action Ballots (Wales & South West Region)

130. Modern Voting Method (Midland & East Coast Region)

MODERN VOTING METHODS FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION BALLOTS

This Congress notes and deplores the pledge made by the Prime Minister that a future Conservative Government would introduce legislation requiring unions to achieve a minimum threshold for voting purposes before any lawful industrial action could be taken.

This pledge is nothing more than an outright assault upon the right to strike, and is intended to swing the balance of industrial power even further towards the employers in this country.

Congress recognises, however, that a contributory cause of low ballot turnouts is the method restriction that applies to the voting process.

In order to promote greater industrial democracy, the introduction of electronic vote casting, which is a simple and inexpensive exercise, should be facilitated. This would help overcome the reluctance to vote postally and bring the process into the digital era.

This Congress asks the Central Executive Council and calls upon the GMB nationally to campaign against any back-door way of restricting the right to strike for:

- a change in legislation with the objective of members being able to participate in industrial ballots
- the implementation of alternative voting methods aimed at increasing worker participation in the ballot process and utilising electronic voting methods which also includes adopting a GMB app

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

(Carried)

SIS. C. SIBLEY (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, the Tory union-haters have clearly said they intend to introduce legislation in any new term of office that would affect the majority required in any industrial action ballot to take lawful strike or any other form of action. Nothing really new about that, of course, given the history since 1979 of shackles imposed which were designed to weaken the right to stand up to an employer's arbitrary use of power at the workplace. However, this step really is one too far as it serves to threaten that very basic right of organised labour to apply the ultimate sanction of the withdrawal of its labour.

The proposal must be firmly resisted but we have to be looking at ways of ensuring that the voice of our members is loudly heard when it comes to voting in any industrial action ballot. As the old motto goes, "Unity is strength" and the stronger the Yes vote in any ballot the stronger our negotiating position is with the employer. At present, workers can only be balloted on industrial action by way of voting papers being sent to their home address. This is an archaic and limited form of balloting that leads all too often to low turnouts. Critics then claim that action is not justified – by the way, neither is our Government on that basis – as it is not representative of the majority wish and even our members can lose confidence when too many of their workmates fail to cast their vote.

The new technology revolution provides a fairly obvious and potentially effective solution to low ballot participation levels. Whilst there is no real case for government raising the turnout threshold in any ballot, we as trade unionists need to consider ways of improving this aspect of workplace industrial democracy. In this day and age there seems to be very few workers who do not have access to a smart phone or an iPad, or similar form of device. Sending ballot papers to home addresses is not the most effective way of promoting high levels of involvement in these ballots. Workers lead busy lives and the plethora of junk mail being put through letter boxes often results in most of it being placed into the recycling box unopened. It is all too easy for that important ballot paper to be discarded in that way and the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process being irrecoverably lost.

The use of digital devices lends itself to this objective and the experience both within the GMB and elsewhere of using this type of method in surveying members and for similar purposes is that much higher levels of involvement are achieved. Congress recognises that GMB policy supports the arrangement of workplace ballots for industrial action and this motion's call for electronic voting usage is without prejudice to that. It is, however, a step in the right direction and should be seen as part of an overall campaign to defend the right to strike in this country. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlene. Secunder?

BRO. P. McLAUGHLIN (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* As the Conservatives take on their role, their burning desire to crush union rights to take industrial action increases with the implementation of increased percentages of ballot papers to be returned in order for lawful action to proceed. Although they came up with this rule it was not applied to them. Having an application easily downloadable to a smart device will allow members to participate in industrial ballots anywhere with minimal disruption, i.e. they do not have to tick a box and take it to the post box. Besides that, many voting papers are not being returned. For example, if they have moved and not notified the GMB of the change of address, this can and does cost our union a considerable amount of money. With the introduction of this matter I believe it would increase the amount of ballots, reduce expenditure to our union, and help the environment. It looks to be the way forward. Thank you, Congress. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Congress, does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Speak now. You have the man up here that can put it right. Hi, Matt.

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): I am speaking on Motion 137. While I sympathise with the sentiment of this motion, I do feel that we need to treat this with caution by adopting the principle of beyond reasonable doubt simply because if one of our members raises a grievance against a bullying manager, applying this principle will see a lot of bullying managers get away with the disgraceful behaviour that they will be subjecting their employees to. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): The right to strike: I sit and listen and I feel sick. I joined the union in the 1960s, nobody said to me about going on strike. I went on strike when I had a cause to go on strike. I have watched over the years different governments erode trade union rights. Labour governments as well. They were in power for a long time but they never changed a thing when it came to industrial law. We are growing a soft underbelly. The trade unions have to do something. We cannot sit back and just let them carry on because they are in government and it is law. We can change law. We have done it before.

When I came into the trade unions I had to take my tea at a machine. I had to work my Saturday as part of my working week. I fought for these things over the years and it really sickens me to see that we are prepared to sit back and allow a Tory capitalist government to erode the rights. It is ridiculous. We have to do something. The TUC has to organise and, really, we have to start thinking whether we withdraw our labour. We do not have to meet them. They can do other things they want to do with us. We have done it all before and we can do it again. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? I now call Peter Meyrick to reply. No, before you do, Peter, can I ask Birmingham Region if they want to respond to the point that was made by London Region. Speak to Mary. No? Okay. Carry on, Peter. Congress, I would like you to welcome our new member. He is from Unity and he is in the Fine Manufacturing Section of Unity. Welcome, Peter. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. MEYRICK (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, proud to be speaking for the first time on behalf of the CEC. *(Applause)* Congress, the CEC asks you to support Motions 135 and 137 with a qualification.

Dealing first with Motion 135, the CEC is naturally supportive of legal measures that may reduce the ease with which employers may dismiss for so-called some other substantial reason. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of employers using this potentially fair reason for dismissal as a tactic to justify mass termination and re-engagement in an ordinary context and TUPE transfer situations.

The qualification relates to the fact that the CEC believes that the most effective response of the union needs to be in solidarity, organisation, and collective action in the industrial context rather than rely on changes to the law.

Finally, on Motion 137, again the CEC is naturally supportive of legal measures to address the particular issue the motion highlights. In this case, it is the ease with which employers can dismiss for capability or conduct without having to prove the alleged offence or the alleged inadequacy. It is longstanding union policy to challenge this.

The qualification relates to the fact that in its reference to common law the motion appears to be proposing to do this by importing the standards of criminal law into the employment tribunals. The CEC considers this may not be the answer. There are other types of cases such as discrimination cases where the burden of proof has become a complex and contentious area where we would be cautious about doing this. The whole field of employment law requires review to provide a more supportive framework of rights for workers as ever in order to strengthen trade unionism in the workplace before we seek to rely on changes to the law.

Congress, the CEC asks you to support Motions 135 and 137 with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, did you enjoy that vodka! *(Laughter)* Well done. Colleagues, I now ask London Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* I now ask Birmingham Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* You do? Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)* I now put Composite 4, Motions 135, 136 and 137, to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Composite Motion 4 was Carried.

Motion 135 was Carried.

Motion 136 was Carried.

Motion 137 was Carried.

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Item 2, and I will be calling TUC Membership, London Region, Employment and Trade Union Rights, North West & Irish Region, and Facility Time, London Region, to move, and Evelyn Martin to respond.

TUC MEMBERSHIP MOTION 26

26. TUC MEMBERSHIP

Congress notes the growing membership of the TUC. We are however deeply concerned at the shrinking level of Trade Union Membership across the UK.

Congress agrees this is a major factor in the falling living standards of many families and a key factor in the growing financial inequality that is becoming embedded as we head towards becoming a two-tier nation.

Congress therefore agrees that the GMB should urge the TUC to consider means to address this, aiming to rebuild trade union membership to its 1980 levels, giving special consideration to those many workers not in traditionally organised industries.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, I joined my first trade union in 1975, a time when union membership stood at about 10 million people; membership peaked then in 1980 to just over 12 million. Sadly, today union membership has declined to about half of that, or just over 6.5 million, less than half it was at its peak and probably the lowest since just after the Second World War. In reality it is worse than that because of the increase of the workforce in the UK. The percentage of union members is lower than it was in those days.

Since May 8th, and that disastrous election result, there has been a lot of talk from some people who we will meet tomorrow and some who we will not, they have talked about aspiration. Let me make it very clear to those people that me, and the people in this room, and our members, we all have aspirations but it is not the crass aspiration of the ability to shop at John Lewis or at Waitrose. It is the aspiration to have decent employment rights, the aspiration not to have a zero-hours contract, the aspiration to have a pay rise that keeps apace with inflation, the aspiration not to have to rely on a food bank to feed your children, the aspiration to have a decent safety net when times are hard, and the aspiration from exploitative employers not to rely on state benefits to pay workers through in-work benefits, a living wage, and job security. I could go on.

A lot of the same people also have been talking about cutting red tape. I actually agree with cutting red tape. I agree that we should cut up the red tape that trusses up the trades union Movement like turkeys at Christmas time and forces us to jump through hoops. (*Applause*) Sadly, we know that Cameron and the Tories have already announced further red tape for trade unions whilst cutting red tape for so-called employers. I call that protection, not red tape. That is why we need a strong campaigning and growing Trades Union Movement.

There are some small signs of hope. Membership in the private sector has grown for the first time in a number of years. The GMB has shown over the last 10 years that growth can be achieved: if you organise,

you grow. Rights at work are not won by politicians but by workers coming together, organising, and fighting. The path ahead will not be easy, it never was, but a strong, growing, and vibrant Trades Union Movement is the prize that we seek. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Vaughan.

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Congress, the decline in trade union membership has at least bottomed out but whilst, as the mover has just said, membership in the private sector has seen an increase in recent years, membership in the public sector is still in decline. Nobody is suggesting the task ahead of reversing these trends and moving to growth is going to be easy. A Tory government hell bent on destroying our ability to organise the demise of the manufacturing sector and the increase of jobs in the service sector, and the casualisation of the workforce all make the job difficult, but growth can be achieved.

The GMB has seen an increase of 56,000 members in the last 10 years as a result of our GMB@Work policy, a policy that sets clear aims, targets, and goals, nationally, regionally, and locally, a policy that emphasises the need to organise from the bottom up and not the top down, a policy that empowers and gives tools to our activists and branches to organise themselves correctly. The GMB are not telling other unions how to organise but unless they do, unless the Movement gets to grips with recruiting in non-traditional and difficult sectors, our power to defend working people will diminish further.

The Tory Party have made very clear their agenda for trade unions. They are clear that they want to neuter us. Our message from the Congress to ourselves and to brothers and sisters in other unions is, we are not going away, we are not going to be neutered, but we are going to organise, we are going to grow, and we are going to protect working people. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jamie. North West & Irish Region?

EMPLOYMENT AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS MOTION 27

27. EMPLOYMENT AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

This Congress calls upon the GMB to recognise the failure of the Coalition Government and especially the Stormont Assembly to deal with youth unemployment especially in N Ireland which has the highest % of youth unemployment in the UK. Unfortunately, those who are successful in obtaining jobs have found they have lower Terms & Conditions and pensions than previous employees. We recognise this is as a result of the increasing number of anti-union employers. Proposals to increase the % needed to obtain success in Trade Union ballots for industrial action is another attempt to weaken Trade Union membership, targets that Parliamentary candidates and Mayoral elections will not have to abide by. It shows contempt for employees' rights that adds to the recent changes to Industrial Legislation, e.g. Tribunal introducing fees and laws that were hard fought to achieve. The voice of the backbone of industry and the economy is not only being quietened but snuffed out. While recognising the work that has been done, we call upon the GMB to work to combine trade union support and action, to put more pressure on the Scottish parliament, Welsh & Stormont Assemblies, Westminster and Ireland to alleviate the pain and suffering of residents. To coordinate all over the UK and Ireland simultaneously, TV adverts, using modern communications, speak with one voice to stimulate the benefits of Trade Union membership, the rights of everyone to be acknowledged in Industrial Law and the right to a well-paid job.

X07 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. T. PATRICK (North West & Irish): The impetus for action on this motion has increased with the Conservative Party now declaring the changes they propose to the Trades Union Bill. All our worst fears

will come to haunt us if the trade unions do not come together and get all workers, not just union members, to realise the rights which the unions fought for, with the benefit from the EU employment law. Trade unions need to be aware of any changes to the laws in order to best protect members at work as rights that give some protection to workers are now going to be dismantled.

This Government will put into place restrictions on trade union elections and ballots which no other group will have to abide by. The ultimate resource, the right to strike, will be almost impossible to obtain. How will workers' rights fare under a Tory regime? We all know the answer to that. Stormont governments promote large companies by giving them grants. Unfortunately, it does not promote higher salaries and better terms and conditions for workers. They propose reduction in public sector employment which has already been felt on the mainland and is about to hit Northern Ireland, and with a third of jobs in the public sector relying on them it would mean a large chunk of income taken out of people's pockets and the economy suffering.

Northern Ireland has a large percentage of the lowest paid workers in the UK and the highest unemployed young people. Companies are continually reducing the terms and conditions of workers. Zero-hours contracts are promoted as good for workers and young workers are reluctant to join trade unions because of the threat of losing their jobs. Trade unions in the past also suffered poor working conditions and low wages but they fought for better conditions that some workers are lucky enough to have today. However, fewer and fewer benefit from them.

Combined action by trade unions can and will change that by motivating workers and enabling them to feel their worth. Now is the time for trade unions to come together and promote all that is best in trade unions. By working together we can empower workers and by increasing the number of trade union members. Divided we will not survive. Together we stand united and powerful. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tracey. Secunder?

BRO. P. McMURRAY (North West & Irish): The mover of this motion has painted the picture of how this enforced austerity will affect the jobs, rights, and wellbeing of our members throughout Northern Ireland. My branch consists of support workers employed in education so I will talk about this area.

We are in the midst of a financially driven change creating academy schools with autonomy to run their own budgets, create their own schemes of employment, and ignore hard won terms and conditions. Because each is an independent employer, representation and collective bargaining will prove more difficult. Recognition is not guaranteed with these employers. The measure of the frustration of GMB members was crystallised in the ballot results earlier this year and the substantial turnout on the day of action was further proof.

Congress, to challenge this, a wide-ranging strategy of action across all parts of the public sector, strike action and action short of strike is the only way we can respond to a government that will not listen. I believe we have the support of the public because they are all well aware of the damage being done to the services. We have the power. Let's organise and use it. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Motion 28, London Region to move.

**FACILITY TIME
MOTION 28**

28. FACILITY TIME

Congress agrees the GMB should initiate a campaign to promote the benefits Trade Unions bring to the workplace. It is a well-known fact, that where a Trade Union is recognised by an employer, there are fewer accidents in the workplace, saving the employer money and problems.

It is also far simpler for an employer to negotiate with a recognised Trade Union than with numerous individuals, again saving the employer time and money. There is a public misconception about Trade Union stewards and we need to publicise the benefits that trade unions bring to employers and employees.

Congress, we ask you to support this motion and to support your stewards.

CAMDEN APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. McNULTY (London): President, Congress, the benefits of facility time for union representatives are not to be regarded as costs to the employers as union reps and the work that we do for our members and working with employers represents an important workplace resource for the employers throughout the United Kingdom in both the private sector and the public sector. Union representatives have a lot to give to their employers and the organisations that employ them. Reps carry out wide-ranging and often demanding complex roles, negotiating with managers, representing members in grievances and disciplinary hearings, challenging for better conditions, better pay, better terms and conditions, and many more, and all agreed by the employers, and facility time has a fundamental impact for the employer as well as our members, becoming a voice for the voiceless yet still saving on average between £22m to £43m in the production of the workplace development.

In 2009, the TUC and the CBI issued a joint statement on the role of union representatives, of how a workplace can gain from trade union representation, identifying a role we play as a trade union and acknowledging the need for union representatives in the workplace, supporting them to fulfil their role, colleagues, and the fundamentals of union facility time. The general public misconceptions are that of ballots, strikes, industrial action, and, as we all know, bad press. As a result of reducing the number of tribunal cases, plus the benefits to society worth between £1.136m to £371m, by reducing workplace injuries and work related illness saving at least £19m, by reducing dismissals and giving back the employers a saving of around £143m in recruitment costs as a result of reducing early exits, union reps have been instrumental in training in the workplace which benefits employers as well as employees. However, there are none of these misconceptions. As the press fail to realise, we are a recognised trade union and our stewards are the backbone of this great union working tirelessly to promote and campaign for the good of the members and the Trades Union Movement. It is those goals we all aim towards in promoting good benefits a good trade union brings to a workplace. Congress, I move this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dennis. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): According to a national survey and polling company, Mori, around three in four Brits believe the trade unions are essential. It is clearly based on this that people do believe in the work of the trade unions. Millions of people believe good trade unions fight for their members to protect them against the bullying tactics of some of the employers. The trade unions are there to debate on behalf of their members legally. They are not there just to call a strike, although in some cases this may be the

only way to make your voice heard. However, the facts can sometimes slip away from public view. These are the facts.

Where trade unions are recognised by employers, there are fewer accidents in the workplace. It is far simpler to negotiate with employers through the unions and trade unions save employers time and money. It is clear to me, and to us here in the GMB, that the trade unions bring great benefit to the employers and, of course, to the employee, but it is not always clear to everyone else. The GMB should begin a campaign to promote the benefit trade unions can bring. Through proper public engagement we can remove the misconceptions about union stewards and promote the fact that the trade unions make a difference. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Mo. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Brendan, you are getting off lightly. I call Evelyn Martin to reply on behalf of the CEC. Come along, Evelyn.

SIS. E. MARTIN (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking Congress to support Motion 27 with a qualification. Motion 27 sets out the attack on both workers' rights and trade union organisation over a decade, and calls for greater unity among trade unions as they respond. It sets out the impact on union strength of mass unemployment, low pay, and casual work for those new to jobs or for anyone trying to get back to work once they are on the dole.

The motion also sets out barriers put in the way of workers trying to form unions where they work and take effective action. The motion rightly identifies that only combined trade union pressure on our elected representatives, coupled with workplace organisation and collective action, has any hope of succeeding both in changing the laws and the attitude of employers.

A high degree of coordination between trade unions already takes place, especially politically in the recent election but more could be done. Congress, the CEC is asking you to support this motion with only one qualification. The motion calls for the use of TV adverts to stimulate trade union membership. There is, however, no evidence that TV adverts work and no proven link between the use of these tactics and overall union membership. Congress, please support Motion 27 with the qualification. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Evelyn. Does North Wales & Irish Region accept the qualification? Yes? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Congress accept? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I now put Motions 26, 27, and 28 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 26 was Carried.

Motion 27 was Carried.

Motion 28 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, as you are aware and you know who he is, but I will tell you, we have our guest speaker with us and it gives me great pleasure to welcome Brendan Barber to Congress.

Brendan is no stranger to union conferences and he has always been a good friend of the GMB. Brendan worked at the TUC in various roles for 37 years. He was TUC General Secretary from 2003 to 2012. As General Secretary he did an enormous amount to promote union organising and education and training opportunities for working people. After leaving the TUC he was honoured for his services to employment relations. He was appointed the Chair of ACAS early last year. Brendan, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our Congress and invite you to speak. *(Applause)*

BRENDAN BARBER, CHAIR OF ACAS, ADDRESSED CONGRESS

BRENDAN BARBER: Mary, many thanks indeed for those kind words of welcome and it is a real pleasure for me to join you again at a GMB Congress. It is great, too, that your Congress is taking place here in Ireland, in a city that has seen its share of workers' struggles. The bonds of solidarity between British and Irish trade unionism have always been strong and your presence here in Dublin is a vivid reminder of the importance of that friendship.

Of course, the last time I addressed your Congress I was speaking as General Secretary of the TUC and I passed on the leadership of the TUC at the end of 2012 to Frances O'Grady and, as I expected, she has been doing a fantastic job ever since, speaking up for trade unionism with courage, with determination, and with passion. Those qualities have been sorely needed in these toughest of times.

The recession caused by the financial crisis of 2008 has cast a long shadow, hammering living standards of millions of people. Never have unions been more needed. From its earliest days in 1889 the GMB has always been a great campaigning union. Under the brilliant leadership of Paul that tradition has been reenergised. Whether it is fighting for fair pay or winning justice for the victims of blacklisting, the GMB is a doughty champion for working people.

Paul should be particularly proud. He has always made a massive contribution to the leadership of the TUC. He has led TULO's efforts in support of labour and with your backing he has turned the GMB into a lean mean fighting machine. He even paid his speeding ticket from when he and I visited Australia a couple of years ago. You should all be proud of the work that your union does.

When I left the TUC after 37 years' service, I had no clear plan for what might happen next. It had been a hard decision for me but the time seemed right to move on to a different phase in my life and I was confident that the TUC could go from strength to strength under new leadership. When later in 2013 the idea came that I might take on the chairmanship of ACAS I was very much attracted to it. ACAS was an organisation that I knew well having spent many, many hours working with some of its conciliators on some extraordinarily difficult disputes. It was an organisation more than that, in good standing with the Trades Union Movement and with a really positive mission. Yes, of course, to be a source of trusted expertise to help resolve difficult collective disputes but also beyond that to be a strong advocate for best practice in how people are treated at work.

It is often said in company reports that people are our most important resource. Well, ACAS is all about trying to turn that sentiment into a living reality in Britain's workplaces, working as an independent, impartial, trusted expert for unions and employers alike. Collective disputes like that recently at Network Rail hit the headlines and understandably so, but while other ACAS work may attract less media interest it is just as important.

Last year, for example, as well as assisting in resolving around a thousand collective disputes, we also trained around 30,000 delegates on ACAS courses. We helped around a million people who called the ACAS telephone helpline. We ran almost 2,000 advisory projects in workplaces of all sorts and sizes. We helped around six million visitors to the ACAS online services. We provided advice and guidance on every possible issue in employment law and good workplace employment practice.

We also had around 80,000 people use our new early conciliation service through which anyone with a potential claim to an employment tribunal first refers the matter to ACAS to give us a chance to explore whether there is a possibility that the matter might be resolved through conciliation rather than the stress

and expense involved in having to go through a full tribunal hearing. Only a quarter of those needed to proceed to a full tribunal.

ACAS, of course, operates within the framework of law laid down by Parliament. We do not have the power to shape the law itself; that is for the politicians. We have seen significant changes in recent times, new rights on shared parental leave and flexible working, with changes to TUPE, and of course the highly disputed introduction of employment tribunal fees.

In the run-up to the recent General Election the Conservative Party set out proposals for other changes, in the legal provisions around industrial action and the role of the certification officer and union administration. The details of exactly what may be proposed have not yet been made clear but they will inevitably be hugely controversial and your debates this week, as we have heard this morning, I am sure your debates will play a key role in shaping the Trades Union Movement's response.

Within two years we are also promised a referendum on our membership of the European Union. Let us not forget how many of the rights at work now guaranteed in law derive from the Social Chapter of the European Union, first signed up to by the incoming 1997 Labour Government. Paid holidays, rights to parental leave, equal treatment for part-timers, agency workers, temporary workers, even the principle of equal pay itself, all of these are underpinned by Europe and all could be at risk in the new Government's European negotiations and the in/out vote to come.

How people are treated at work matters hugely to their sense of dignity and self-worth but treating everyone with basic fairness is not just about social justice, it is also a fundamental building block of a successful economy that can deliver prosperity for all. Amid some of the slightly more optimistic reports about the beginnings of an economic recovery in the UK, one of the more depressing indicators is of our national productivity performance compared to the other major industrial nations.

In 2007, we lagged behind the average of the G7 nations by 9%. Now we have fallen 19% behind and it is our productivity that will ultimately determine the economy's capacity to deliver the higher wages and living standards so desperately needed. The economists have debated long and hard what lies behind this productivity puzzle and they come up with lots of answers, low levels of investment in plant and technology, inadequate spending on training and skills, too much short-termism in the way our companies are run. All of these matter, of course, and must be part of the answer but I think that what happens in workplaces and how well people and change are managed is a crucial part of the answer, too, and all the evidence shows that when people have a strong voice at work it makes a huge positive difference. Yet despite this, there is still so much sheer waste of talent and human potential in countless workplaces up and down our land. ACAS is promoting a wide-ranging debate with employers and workers and policymakers, too, on how we can all respond to this challenge.

Mary, I know you have a packed agenda at Congress this week, including the hustings tomorrow where the candidates for Labour's leadership will be setting out their visions for Labour's political renewal. All of your debates matter highly. This is a union that has set the agenda for so many years on the economy, on rights at work, on the battle for equality. The Trades Union Movement needs the GMB at the top of its form and so, too, do the millions of working people who depend on the Trades Union Movement. Thanks for listening this morning and have a great Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Brendan, thank you for making the effort to travel all the way to Dublin. You probably got here quicker than you would to Newcastle. What you forgot to tell Congress was that when you were in Australia with Paul they sent you the bill for the fine and you made him pay it. That was it. I know you are on your way back this afternoon but we have enjoyed it. I have enjoyed knowing you and

we would like you to accept a little gift. You can take those. I am going to act the employer now. I would like you to have that bottle of whiskey but now I would like to take it back because you cannot travel home with it! *(Laughter)*

BRENDAN BARBER: Thank you, Mary. Thanks very much.

THE PRESIDENT: We will take it to London for you! Make sure it is whiskey in there when you open it! Okay, Congress, let's get back to business and wish Brendan a safe journey home.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: Now, Motion 159, Paternity Pay, London Region to move, and Motion 160, Unlicensed Surveillance, London Region to move, with James Stribley to answer on behalf of the CEC.

PATERNITY PAY MOTION 159

159. PATERNITY PAY

Congress, at the moment paternity pay is capped at £138.18 a week or 90% of your average weekly earnings if that's less.

We call on the Government to end this cap and pay the employee the full rate of pay they would normally receive.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Colleagues, historically the care of newborn children has fallen on mothers. There was a huge fight led by trade unions, especially GMB, to get paid maternity leave for mothers. Colleagues, despite poverty pleading business objections, we achieved reasonable but not great statutory maternity leave provisions: so far so good.

Congress, research and feedback has shown that giving fathers time to look after and share in the care of newborn sons and daughters has a very positive knock-on effect. Colleagues, it has been proven beyond any doubt that fathers who can and do take paternity leave are more likely to take proactive roles in childcare going forward. Paternity leave enables the bond between a newborn and dad to be as strong as the natural bond between newborn and mum. It has been proven that this bond will lead to dads reading to toddlers, telling stories, playing games with them, and having good interaction during their most important years. Paternity leave is also good for mothers because a lot of the historical pressure is taken off them.

The agenda has always been to increase maternity leave and GMB will always support that but today more governments are coming round to the fact that statutory paternity leave is just as important. Colleagues, in the UK, although the belief is there, that belief is not backed up by hard action. Paternity leave allowance in the UK is a disgrace. At the time of writing this motion, paternity pay in the UK was capped at £138.18 a week or 90% of average earnings, whichever was less. Today it has gone up to £139.58 a week: big deal. Colleagues, the fact of the matter is that because of this ridiculous low threshold only better off families can take advantage of paternity leave and the benefit it brings. The poorest just cannot afford to take it; they lose out, their children lose out. It is just not right. Congress, it should be the case that fathers from any income bracket should be able to take full advantage of full paid paternity leave. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Secunder?

BRO. R. PUDASAINI (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, caps used to be worn on the head. You wore them to keep the rain or the sun off your head but caps to the last coalition government and this vicious one has nothing to do with millinery. To them caps are the means to keep the poor in poverty and workers down. The maximum worker benefit is capped at £26,000 soon to be reduced to £23,000, poverty for an out of work large family. There is a cap on public service pay, there is a cap on maternity pay, and there is a cap on paternity pay. The only things that are not capped are bankers' bonuses and the MPs' salaries. *(Applause)* Colleagues, paternity leave works. It works for children. It works for families. It works for parents. It should be available to all fathers, not just the wealthy ones. Congress, £138.58 is not a living wage. It is not the minimum wage and if you take 10% out that is a poverty wage. Paternity leave should be paid at actual wages so that all dads can take advantage of it. Congress, please support this motion. I second. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rajendra. Well done. Motion 160, London.

UNLICENSED SURVEILLANCE MOTION 160

160. UNLICENSED SURVEILLANCE

Congress agrees the GMB should campaign for the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to adopt a proactive approach on employers who are abusing CCTV surveillance and data log systems. We believe that the ICO should conduct thorough audits of all workplaces.

We all know and recognise technology is rapidly growing and expanding globally with data security at the forefront of nearly every company, organisation, local authority and government.

However, this rapid growth of data technology is now constantly being abused by employers, via deliberate, overt and covert monitoring, together with log in technology data, plus CCTV surveillance, used outside of licensing through the independent – Information – Commissioner's Office aiding employers to covertly monitor its workforce without appropriate licence or regard to legislation and laws on data protection or CCTV surveillance. We ask Congress to support this motion.

CAMDEN APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. McNULTY (London): Congress, we are all aware of the big brother surveillance in knowing we are monitored by CCTV on average around 60 times a week, or more, or even a day. This is now reflecting in the workplace throughout the country. Together, with new technology moving at the speed of light, forever changing direction within the workplace, specifically it is designed to monitor its workforce than used for productivity as we are led to believe. For example, how is covert monitoring productivity related when phone systems are now used to monitor our calls, IT computer systems to monitor what time we log in at work, tracking systems, what time we start our vehicles, and how long they are parked for, and did we use them over the weekend.

Who needs keys when we now have biometrics to use fingerprints to open doors, and if we do not offer our fingerprints as a key, we are threatened with the possibility of dismissal and I am sure this is an infringement on the Human Rights Act. However, when challenged we are told it is to safeguard employers like health and safety and crime prevention, nothing to do with productivity. I have to agree, it is more about an invasion of the new silent type of monitoring systems that have invaded the workplace and being used covertly and unscrupulously by managers throughout by deliberately ignoring the rights under the Data Protection Act.

The secret security never stops, never sleeps, never eats, and is constantly monitoring an ever increasing data that is introduced as new technology in the workplace. This silent invisible security guard is at the front of monitoring every day for every second in the workplace, for the use of all aspects of work related issues, like monitoring, when you take a toilet break, for example, when you go to another part of a building, who you phone, what time, and the complete duration of the call, all the emails you ever, ever sent, down to the second you entered the room or an elevator.

All this data is open to abuse. We do not disagree with technology, as I am sure most of you have data mobiles with apps, internet, and connectivity. It is how we use this technology and how it is monitored that can be worrying. We all know technology is knowingly abused or unlicensed on a daily basis by companies, organisations, and local governments, and many more throughout the United Kingdom, in the knowledge that there is little or nothing the workforces can do as the data is monitored by themselves. This technology is a clear hindrance towards the workplace, clearly hinders the Information Commissioner's Office, making it powerless and toothless to implement robust sanctions that are more in line with the current technology and data breaches that are happening daily within the workplace.

Colleagues, this abuse cannot continue. It is why I call upon the GMB union to take the campaign to pressure the Information Commissioner's Office to implement a more stringent and robust attitude by implementing and enforcing new legislation, together with more stringent legal action towards breaches and abuse in covert monitoring of the workplace. Data is used in a format outside the Data Protection Act, unlicensed or licensed. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): President, Congress, love it or hate it, technology is advancing at a rapid rate and this will not change. People, management in particular, will use it whenever they can and, yes, some will abuse it and again I refer to management in particular in this. This can be used against our members. We need proactive regulation for this.

Some years ago I was asked to represent a member who was being brought to task for alleged poor service to customers. She worked behind a bar at a residential college for training teachers for leadership roles in schools across the UK. At the end of one day's training, a group of teachers went straight into the bar and stayed all night. When it came to closing time, our member stopped serving alcohol. Unfortunately, some of the by then drunken teachers saw this as poor service and cited this as an example of poor service in the feedback forms. Some weeks later the member was back at work and a customer started to engage in conversation and started asking questions that were just a bit too searching.

Some weeks later I was asked to represent the member at a disciplinary for what the member had said in that conversation and for poor service cited in the feedback forms. Congress, after some digging I discovered that the word perfect record of that conversation had been recorded by the customer who was wearing a hidden camera in a tiepin. I argued that this was unacceptable evidence in a disciplinary. Management suggested otherwise citing it merely as a mystery shopper exercise. I argued that this was not the GMB's view. So far as the union was concerned, this was covert surveillance using an agent provocateur. I pointed out in a one-to-one outside the disciplinary that our member could get more money from a Sunday newspaper for the story about drunken teachers attacking one of our members than she was ever likely to earn in a year behind the bar.

Congress, I am sorry to say that this case ended in a dismissal. I am pleased to say, however, dismissal not of our member but of the manager for misusing technology and data. *(Applause)* We need proactive

regulation not just to protect our members but protect managers from themselves. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Vaughan. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. B. COOK (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I am speaking in support of this motion. I have come across this surveillance being abused in my workplace, which is Asda. It is a form of bullying when abused. Come on, let's push it and make sure it is used in the right manner. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to come in? No? I call James Stribley for the CEC. James to reply on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 160, unlicensed surveillance. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The motion highlights the use and abuse of CCTV in the workplace. Use of CCTV cameras is covered by the Data Protection Act and the ICO enforce these rules. In recognition of the increase of these cameras they had a day-to-day code of practice last October put in place and a surveillance camera commissioner. We fully support employees being made aware of their rights and we are in the process of producing an information pack for workplace organisers as a result of Motion 29 being carried at last year's Congress. If an employee is concerned about the use of CCTV in their workplace, they should first raise it with the employer or their union. As an example, the GMB have campaigned that the use of CCTV cameras in care homes is not the answer to the crisis in the care sector and we have raised the issue of the use of hidden cameras with the Care Quality Commissioner.

The motion asks for an audit of all workplaces and the ICO does not carry out regular audits of public authorities and can do advisory visits of workplaces by written request. The qualification is that the motion asks the ICO to conduct audits of all workplaces, which is not practical and not within their remit. Therefore, Congress, please support this motion with this qualification. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done, James Stribley. Well done. We are proud of you. London Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Does Congress? *(Agreed)* I put Motions 159 and 160 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 159 was CARRIED.

Motion 160 was CARRIED.

CEC STATEMENT ON FRACKING

CEC STATEMENT ON "FRACKING" (HYDRAULIC FRACTURING FOR SHALE GAS)

Introduction

1. Congress 2014 passed a motion (Composite 22) calling for the receipts from extracting and selling shale gas to be 100% publicly owned for the benefit of the nation. That decision was consistent with longstanding GMB policy on public ownership of energy and utilities, which the CEC believes is the most effective way to ensure the reliability and security of supply necessary to meet the nation's domestic and business energy needs at an affordable price.

2. However, the CEC recognises that since Composite 22 was passed in 2014, there has been intense public interest in the subject of fracking for shale gas. Hydraulic fracturing, known as “fracking”, involves shattering rock strata by forcing in a mixture of water, sand and chemicals to release gas (shale gas). Opponents of the process say that environmental risks include water and air pollution, whereas supporters point to the reduction in gas prices that benefits consumers (as in the USA for example) because of the increased supply of gas.

3. Fracking is an issue which has lately aroused a great deal of emotion and polarised opinion in the UK. Unfortunately, as a result, much of the debate which should be taking place has been shrouded in myth, misunderstanding and misinformation.

4. On the one hand, in its zeal to attract investors and paper over the cracks in its energy policy, the coalition Government has adopted a gung ho approach to fracking which has seen huge publicly funded subsidies thrown at private companies to encourage them to proceed without caution. On the other hand, local protest groups concerned about the prospect of exploratory drilling in their neighbourhoods have seen their ranks swelled by environmental activists who are fundamentally opposed to the use of any fossil fuels whatsoever.

5. The CEC believes that both of these positions is equally unjustifiable. This statement therefore sets out the CEC’s current position on fracking, set within the context of the balanced energy policy that GMB has always maintained. It calls for motions 337 and 338 to be referred, as both motions are at odds with the Union’s policy position agreed at Congress 2014, and also reflect the confusion that the emotion that currently surrounds fracking has led to (see paragraph 13 below). The CEC is asking Congress to grant the time necessary to monitor developments around fracking and shale gas in order to conduct a thorough and comprehensive analysis that will inform its stance on this crucial issue.

Gas will remain crucially important in meeting Britain’s future energy needs

6. The CEC recognises that the challenge of climate change is undoubtedly real, and believes that there is not enough concrete action taking place across the globe to tackle the threat that climate change poses. We cannot ignore the science, nor be selective in picking quotes from scientific reports. Unfortunately, many participants in the climate change debate do exactly that – denying the need for any form of energy generation other than that from renewable sources, and failing to acknowledge or grasp the basic facts about energy supply and usage in Britain.

7. As both the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the independent UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) have recognised, gas has an important part to play in Britain reducing our carbon emissions. The simple truth is that the UK will be using gas for many decades to come. Over 80% of homes in the UK are heated by gas. Gas is about four times cheaper than electricity. The price differential between gas and electricity is set to become even wider, so it is simply unrealistic to believe that the British public, still hurting after the massive economic crisis of recent years, are going to tear out their gas boilers and heating systems and replace them with electricity, and then watch their bills go up fourfold.

8. The CEC believes that the debate about fracking must be based upon complete honesty about the economic realities of gas. Without an adequate supply of gas being maintained in the decades to come, as Britain seeks to develop a viable low carbon economy, the future faced by the people of this country is a massive increase in expenditure running into many thousands of

pounds, each and every year. In fact, the future role of gas could be even more crucial in lowering CO emissions in Britain, through the development of micro combined heat and power units to produce heat and electricity for homes. Fuel cells which have zero carbon emissions will have a huge role to play in the future, and these will need gas too.

9. The massive problems posed by climate change are serious, and will not be solved by posturing or burying our heads in the sand. Tackling the climate change crisis goes hand-in-hand with confronting the energy crisis that is increasingly engulfing Britain. This energy crisis manifests itself in a number of ways, including affordability, people's ability to heat their homes and cook their food, the social and economic impact of high energy prices, and the threat to the security of supply that is the result of successive Governments failing to get a grip of the long-term energy policy that the country desperately needs.

10. Security of supply is a particularly vital issue for British industry. The key manufacturing industries, such as ceramics, chemicals and engineering, to name just a few, need stable and affordable energy prices. These industries create and sustain a huge number of jobs, and these are often unionised jobs. We know that unionised work is safer, more secure and better paid. Our manufacturing industries must compete in global markets, yet the fact is that they are struggling to remain competitive, and a significant factor in that is energy prices in Britain. Our energy intensive industries need access to affordable, secure energy supplies. They need the certainty that Britain's energy mix will meet their needs. They, like Britain's households, need gas to be part of that energy mix.

Where should Britain's gas come from?

11. The issue for Britain isn't therefore whether we will use gas or not. We will. The real issue is where we will get our gas from, and who should take the moral responsibility for extracting and supplying the gas we use. This question goes to the very heart of the debate about fracking, but it does not seem to feature strongly in the current arguments. The CEC believes it should, and that GMB's approach to fracking should be rooted in our trade union values of social and economic justice, and based upon the need to exercise a moral responsibility.

12. In order to determine a long-term, responsible and viable position on fracking, the CEC believes there needs to be a comprehensive and objective cost-benefit analysis of the future role of fracking, within the context of how best to ensure the supply of gas that Britain will need for decades to come.

13. Motion 337 asks "why are we using gas extracted from shale"?. This is not correct. Fracking has been in common use in the North Sea since the late 1970s, and in about 200 onshore oil and gas wells since the early 1980s. However, fracking for onshore shale gas was first proposed in 2007 and to date has only been used once, by the company Cuadrilla, in 2011. This process was suspended in 2011 following safety concerns because of two small earthquakes, and although a report in 2012 concluded that fracking for shale gas could continue under stricter monitoring, it is not currently taking place. There is some public confusion about this, because several companies have exploration licences which allow them to carry out drilling to assess the potential feasibility of extracting shale gas reserves.

14. As onshore fracking in the UK is not currently being undertaken, the full facts and evidence of the potential costs and benefits of shale gas extraction in this country are not yet available. An informed and objective debate about fracking needs to take place before Congress could

consider adopting a position that, if anti-fracking, would effectively constrain our ability to carry out one of our core activities as a trade union – representing gas workers. In addition to the important questions about whether fracking will deliver sufficient supplies to reduce consumer prices and mitigate the need to import gas, and (if so) at what cost to the environment, some questions need to be posed that do not feature strongly in the current polarised debate between opponents and supporters of the process:

- Is it acceptable for Britain to import gas from countries where the safety, environmental and regulatory standards are lower than in Britain?
- Should gas be imported from states where there is no civil society, no right to protest and where workers are denied basic trade union rights?
- Is it kinder to the environment for gas to be transported for thousands of miles across continents and oceans before we use it here in Britain?
- If exploratory drilling reveals a plentiful supply of UK shale gas reserves, is it not a moral duty for Britain to take responsibility for providing for our own gas needs from those supplies, rather than importing gas from elsewhere?
- If fracking does go ahead, should the profits from this go to line the pockets of private investors?
- Should trades unions adopt an anti-fracking stance that would leave workers in the shale gas industry open to health and safety risks and exploitation by their employers?

GMB and the Gas Industry

15. GMB has its roots in the gas industry. Our union began by fighting for the rights of unskilled labourers who toiled for long hours in an industry that was dirty and dangerous. For 125 years, we have influenced the development of this great industry and the gas infrastructure which has delivered reliable heat and fuel to British homes and businesses. We no longer represent the most wretched and downtrodden, stacking the satanic furnaces of old, but some of the most highly skilled workers in the country. For 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, our members in the gas industry work hard, in all weathers, to keep the gas that heats and powers our nation flowing safely and securely.

16. However, our members in the modern gas industry have the skills, safety standards, pay and terms and conditions that they now enjoy because for over a century GMB has organised gas workers to win continuous improvements for themselves and their families.

17. GMB's position on fracking must therefore be consistent with the need to organise the shale gas industry if it does develop, as well our duty to protect the future of the UK gas industry and the thousands of GMB members it currently employs. Can and should GMB stand by and allow a new arm of the gas industry to develop and ignore the need to organise and protect the workers it employs?

18. If onshore fracking for shale gas does develop from its current exploratory status into an industry which will be supplying a significant proportion of the gas that Britain needs, GMB will need every ounce of our organising expertise and commitment to safeguard the workers in the

industry. The CEC believes that anything less than protecting these workers from exploitation in a fledgling industry, as we did with gasworkers 125 years ago, would be a betrayal of our history and moral responsibility.

19. GMB has a great history in the gas industry and we know that gas has an important future too. If it does transpire that this future will involve extracting Britain's reserves of shale gas to meet the nation's energy needs, in a manner that is less environmentally damaging and morally reprehensible than importing it, the CEC believes that GMB must stand battle-ready to organise and represent these gas workers and secure the possible pay, safety standards and terms of employment for them. We are a trade union, and that is what we do.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons outlined above the CEC is asking for:

- Congress to support this CEC statement, recognising that gas will continue to play a crucial role in the development of the low carbon economy and as part of a balanced energy mix, and that recruiting and organising gas workers has been a core activity for GMB for 125 years;
- Congress to authorise the commissioning of a CEC Special Report, to be presented to Congress 2016, encompassing a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the role of shale gas in meeting Britain's future gas requirements. The report will address the environmental, social, economic, industrial and safety impacts of fracking for shale gas. If the report concludes that the onshore shale gas industry is set to become a significant part of the energy sector, it will explore how GMB can seek to influence the development of the industry and recruit and organise the workers it will employ.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on in the agenda. I am pleased to say that following a motion on Fracking carried at Congress last year, the debate has moved on. I will tell you how I will proceed with this. I will take the mover and the seconder of the CEC Statement first and then take the two motions on Fracking, Motions 337 and 338, to complete the debate. I call Gary Smith, our National Secretary in charge of the Commercial Services Section to move the CEC Statement, and then Paul McCarthy to second.

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services): Thank you, President. Congress, I think what sets us apart and really defines us as a trade union, certainly over the past decade, has been our courage. We have had the courage to take on bad employers, we have had the courage to challenge the status quo, and we have had the courage to face up honestly to difficult issues.

Telling people what they want to hear, jumping on bandwagons is easy. Let me tell you, Congress, and we know from experience, doing the easy thing does not mean you are always doing the right thing. It will be easy for us to come out and simply oppose fracking but I have to tell you that would be the wrong move for us. It would not be the right thing to do for us as a union, and it would not be the right thing for us as a country because, actually, the issues that we are confronting are complicated and that is why the CEC Statement on Fracking is so carefully worded.

Sure, fracking is hugely contentious and understandably so. The experiences in America were often appalling. We have all seen the stuff on the internet. But we do have to confront some truths about

fracking, too, that is, we have been fracking in the North Sea for 30 years under oil rigs. So, if fracking always leads to earthquakes, why are these oil rigs not always collapsing into the sea? I bet that many of my colleagues in GMB Scotland are unaware that in the past few years they have been fracking in Falkirk and I certainly was not aware until very recently that half the domestic gas in Germany comes from fracking. So, away from all the noise the truth is that fracking has been common practice in Europe, and here in the UK, for many, many years.

There is also another inescapable fact about shale gas, that is, in America it has reduced the price of energy in households and for industry. UK companies, companies that employ thousands of our members, are competing in global markets against those American companies who are enjoying cheap energy. I will tell you this, Congress, if our glass industries, our ceramics industries, and our chemical industries, do not have access to affordable and secure supplies of gas, then we are going to be exporting thousands of more jobs in the years to come.

On the question of cost of energy and gas, we need to bear in mind that over 80% of homes in the UK use gas for heating. Gas is four times cheaper than electricity. So any suggestion that people in this country are going to be ripping out their gas boilers and replacing them with electric heating and watching their bills go up fourfold to heat their homes any time soon is, quite frankly, ridiculous.

Congress, we must face up to the fact that the UK will be using gas for many years to come. The International Panel on Climate Change and the Independent UK Committee on Climate Change have recognised this fact. They say gas has an important part to play in reducing carbon emissions in Britain. Let's also be clear, gas will be vital to develop low emission and zero emission technologies like combined heating power units and fuel cells. Congress, these technologies, I am afraid unlike much of the renewable sector, do hold out the prospect of real work, real jobs for real people, our members, in the gas industry.

Given that we do need gas, it leaves us to ask a very, very important moral and ethical question, is it right that we import gas from countries that have shocking records on human rights, that have fewer trade union rights than us, and have less environmental standards than we do in Britain? You know we already import gas from Russia and Qatar. Does anybody really believe that carting gas across continents and oceans is good for the environment? When we rightly protest about the workers in Qatar who are building the World Cup stadiums, do we actually believe that the treatment of the Qatari gas workers is any different to those workers who are putting up those World Cup stadiums in some of the most appalling working conditions?

Congress, I hope that I have presented you with a scale of the challenge that we face and given you an insight into some of the realities that we have to confront when we are considering our position on fracking and energy more generally. Some will tell you there are simple solutions. They are plain wrong. Those who tell you there are simple solutions are invariably trying to choose the easy way out.

Congress, the CEC Statement is not pro-fracking but it does allow us to move the debate on the whole issue forward and, very importantly, the CEC Statement allows us to continue talking to the shale gas industry about safety, about skills, and about support for UK manufacturing supply chains.

For those who are interested in this important subject, we have a Fringe Meeting at lunchtime with the industry and I hope many of you will attend.

Finally, President, I am very proud to speak for us in the gas industry. I started my apprenticeship with Scottish Gas 32 years ago. As a gas worker, I understood about the history of this union in the gas

industry 126 years ago, starting with Will Thorne and Eleanor Marx, through to today to our wonderful GMB shop stewards and our thousands of members across gas, and that is going to include, by the way, this year a thousand apprentices who are going into the British Gas training centres. (*Applause*)

Congress, gas quite literally flows through our veins. It is in the DNA of this union and if the shale gas industry does develop, GMB needs to be prepared to organise the next generation of gas workers. Let's do the honest thing, it is the hard thing but let's do the right thing, keep the debate going. I urge you to support the CEC Statement. Thank you, President. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Well done. Paul McCarthy. Gary, they will all be making excuses now, knowing it is gas flowing through my veins, when they are late!

BRO. P. McCARTHY (North West & Irish): Seconding the CEC Statement on Fracking. A proposal to do test drilling never mind fracking has been hugely contentious in our region. Communities have expressed legitimate concerns about the potential impact of fracking. Much of the concern clearly has been driven by reports and experiences across America where a deregulated industry was a public relations disaster and one which did real damage.

There is no doubt there are many areas of America where there is total hostility. There is also a balance in areas where both communities and industry benefit from cheap gas. In February, our region organised a debate on fracking with international speakers, which included spokespeople from both sides of the debate and the Atlantic. We invited those from the industry, those from the scientific community, and those from the environmental activists' community. This has helped put the GMB in a powerful position as an honest broker in the debate and GMB has a credible voice in the gas industry and must remember that.

Congress, there are pros and cons to the industry. On the one hand, irresponsible methods of working, extracting the material which can have damaging effects no different to major and large-scale industry, and we cannot ignore it. However, the GMB is at the beginning and the centre of the industry so we are best placed to ensure that it is safe, clean, and responsible. GMB, with the support of Congress, is absolutely committed to that.

Importantly, fracking is viable and if it does not take off, then what is the alternative? If it takes off, we have to be at the front of jobs and the investment. Industry in the North West & Irish Region depends on gas manufacturing within the chemical sector where we have lots of members and is hugely reliant on gas. The chemical industry uses gas as a feedstock for the production of chemicals, including fertilisers, and we fear this industry and others will look for other choices. They will either import gas, and as Gary has suggested there are hidden problems with imported gas, or if we continue along the route we may get the same position that we have in America, and none of us need that.

Congress, there are difficult issues. It is not a simple industry to understand. However, we believe that the CEC Statement is balanced, fair, and ultimately puts the GMB members and working people at the forefront. We must ensure that communities and members are fully engaged with the issue of fracking and, in particular, the health, safety, environment, and social conditions. Support the CEC Statement and I would urge anyone to look at the conclusions of the document on fracking. Thanks. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Well done. I now ask London Region to move Motion 337.

SOCIAL POLICY: THE ENERGY MARKET
FRACKING
MOTION 337

337. FRACKING

Congress would like the use of fracking to be stopped, if the country and other countries are not in favour of using fossil fuel then why are we using gas extracted from shale as surely this is another form of fossil fuel. By pumping high pressure water through the ground this must and will have an adverse effect on the water course underground and cause irreversible pollution which we cannot see.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, I move Motion 337: Fracking. Delegates, we have, in previous Congresses, spoken about the bankers with a “w” in front of the word, and now we are on the “f” word — yes, “fracking”. While I am aware that we may have people in this union employed in this industry, this motion is not about putting people out of work. It is about what is safe. This union is one of the best, if not the best, regarding putting people’s safety first.

What is fracking? Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is drilled, directed at the rock, to release gas inside. Water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure, which allows the gas to flow out of the head of the well. Why is it controversial? First, it uses huge amounts of water which has to be transported to the fracking site. Secondly, it is potentially carcinogenic. The chemical used may escape and contaminate the ground water around the fracking sites. Thirdly, there are serious worries that fracking causes small earth tremors, as happened in Blackpool in 2011.

The Conservative Government closed all of our deep-coal mines down. We are now supposed to be going away from fossil fuel, but we are now looking at fracking as the new fossil fuel. Congress, we do not know enough about fracking. There is no evidence that fracking is safe. I ask you to support the motion and say “No” to fracking in the UK.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there a seconder?
(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)

ANTI-FRACKING
MOTION 338

338. ANTI-FRACKING

This Congress calls on the government to prevent multi-national companies coming to the UK to frack our land. There is not sufficient evidence identifying fracking as safe.

HULL RETAIL AND DISTRIBUTION BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 338 — Anti-Fracking. The Government’s energy policy needs to come under some serious scrutiny. CO2 emissions from coal-fired power stations are, clearly, damaging the environment, and we have to look for alternative energy sources to keep the lights on. Fracking is very controversial and requires more detailed information put out into

the public domain so we can make informed decisions as to whether it is safe to use and to go ahead on a large scale.

People of the nation, including GMB members, are concerned, and rightly so, because we don't know enough about the effects and the damage that fracking may cause to the environment and to communities close by. The Government and the House of Lords, who make the decisions on whether to frack or not, have a conflict of interest as many of them are executives or non-executive members of the fracking companies. These private companies — I emphasise the word “private” — are set to make billions of pounds, while this country will live with the fallout, such as pollution of our waterways, radioactive contamination, earthquakes and the added global impacts of climate change and global warming. Yes, we all want cheaper fuel and cheaper bills, but at what cost?

It has been said that we have been fracking in the North Sea for 30 years. Well, we've been smoking a bloody lot longer than that, and now it is coming to light how harmful that is. So, please, go with the anti-fracking motion and let's get something done about it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol. It's good to see you looking so well. I call the seconder.

SIS. M-L HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, my concern, as it stands, is the isolation in which it appears that the subject of shale-gas extraction, commonly known as “fracking”, is being placed. I don't know much about the issues and I do not have a polarised view either way, but I do accept that we, as a society and culture that we live in, is damaging the planet at a greater scale than ever before. Despite what Nigel Lawson, on behalf of big business, would have us believe, climate change is a reality. But what is causing this? Fossil fuel. But it is such a meaty and complex problem that we are not sure how to approach it and, as a result, often shy away from it. Therefore, I ask the CEC, in going forward, that they formulate and articulate the GMB's position on the environment. That will set out the context in which the special report that they are looking at doing will sit. It can't sit in isolation. We have to be brave and commit ourselves to supporting alternative fuel development encouraging workers into low-carbon technologies. I accept that we have many members working in the gas industry and electricity industry, but we also have many workers working in alternate fuel production. It is those who we also need to support. Whilst I appreciate the historical alliance with the gas industry, it is important that we don't become blinded by it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we are now going to move on to the other two motions on energy, namely 334 to be moved by the Yorkshire Region, and 335 — Fossil Fuels — to be moved by Wales & South West Region. I will be asking Southern Region if they wish to come into the debate as they withdrew their resolution.

DEALING WITH THE TWIN CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY MOTION 334

334. DEALING WITH THE TWIN CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

This Congress must support Climate Change and Energy Sustainability.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, by 2012, the UK must reduce its baseline emissions of six major greenhouse gases by 12.5% from a base line target set in 1990. We believe the government has made a good start to achieve this target; the reduction of CO² in the atmosphere is paramount.

The effects of climate change can be seen in our everyday lives. Weather patterns are becoming increasingly disrupted and unpredictable. During the last 50 years winters have become warmer with heavier rain falls. There have been so called once in a 1000 year events happening for at least the last five years. For example, Boscastle, West Midlands, Malton and who will ever forget the devastating floods in the Cocker mouth area, bridges that have stood for centuries washed away. The Somerset levels were under water last winter for several weeks, bringing devastation to many families.

It is estimated these events have cost over £5 to £7 billion in claims from 2008 to 2014, according to the Association of British Insurers.

The Energy Saving Trust predict that by the end of the century the average temperature in the UK could be 1°C to 4.5°C hotter than today, depending on how high greenhouse gas levels rise. This would impact on all sectors with ironically more demand for energy to cope with the environment fluctuations. We believe with these increased demands on the energy forecast we desperately need to get a move on, developing clean coal technology is essential in dealing with the twin challenges of climate change and energy production. Burning gas to generate electricity is not a long term solution, building new nuclear power stations is one solution. However, the cost and timescale may be insufficient to keep the lights on. Likewise, wind power will not have the capacity to solve the problem.

We still have hundreds of years of coal reserves and it is a travesty that Kellingley and Thoresby Collieries are under threat of closure.

As gas and oil supplies run out, we cannot be in the position of having to rely on others for the security of our future energy demands. With this new technology we can, if the investment is made, lower emissions of CO² giving us control over our own energy demands and creating many new jobs for workers in Britain.

This Congress calls on the new government to invest government money into the development of deep mined coal and carbon capture and storage

LEEDS WORKS DEPARTMENT BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, before I talk on my motion, I would like to show solidarity with the Greencore strikers and the reps who have been sacked. I would like you to support the five of them. Support these brave guys. Climate change is not a long-term problem that can be deferred for future generations to deal with. Climate change impacts have already been observed, as have the threats to global populations and eco systems. It's real and immediate. There are so-called "once in a thousand year" events happening every year now, such as Boscastle, Cocker mouth and, last winter, the flooding of the Somerset Levels.

Energy security is the real problem today, but it should not be. We still have hundreds of years of coal reserves, and it can be clean energy using carbon capture and storage. It is a travesty that Cullingby & Fosby College is under the threat of closure. So this Congress calls on the Government to invest money in the development of deep mines, coal, carbon capture and storage. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much, Brian.

BRO. K. GILBERTHORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I support Motion 334. President and Congress, to meet our Kyoto targets on carbon emissions we cannot do this by renewables alone, so

we need to know how we can reduce the emissions from burning fossil fuels cleanly. The easy way to do this would be to bring into play carbon capture and storage — CCS. It is possible to do this and a brand new plant has just got up and running in Canada, but we should have had that. It should have been operating in Britain. It is difficult to apply CCS to gas, but it is much easier with coal. Ideally, we need some new plants, but you would think that it would be logical to plan ahead in order to build such plants. How wrong can we be?

Over the past few decades, despite successive governments stating that coal is part of the country's energy mix, it should be clean coal, but not much has actually happened.

To put it into context, up to 40% of our electricity is still produced from coal; even more if we have a bad winter. Not many people seem to know this. Just think how we could reduce our emissions if coal was burned cleanly. The problem is that successive governments have not had the proper energy policies and have preferred the market to react. This has merely led to an increase of burning gas. What we need to do is to overcome their reluctance to put their hands in their pockets and put together a plan, which includes demand, security of supply and the provision for achieving emission targets. Part of such a plan should include a coal industry that can maintain security of supply. We're a bit that for that, unfortunately. In July — that is next month — 230 employees will go at Kellingley, with the remainder going in December. Furthermore, Thoresby has already shut. Hatfield in Yorkshire, that is — not the one just north of London, just to make things clear — may follow soon if there is no improvement. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Would Standing Orders, please, implement a gagging order for Yorkshire Region or an ASBO. *(Cheers)*

FOSSIL FUELS MOTION 335

335. FOSSIL FUELS

This Congress recognises that we have to stop burning fossil fuels if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change and realises that we have to protect our members in the energy sector at the same time by achieving a just transition to greener alternatives. This cannot be left to market forces which is why GMB is part of the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) network. TUED cannot survive without funding.

Congress agrees that the GMB will urge the TUC to endorse its aims and will make a reasonable financial contribution to its work.

BRITISH GAS BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Referred)

SIS. H. FERGUSON (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 335. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President and Congress, there is a great deal of information and enthusiasm today about the development and increased production of our global energy needs from alternative energy sources. Solar energy, wind turbines and wave water and all traditional sources of alternative energy that are making progress. The enthusiasm that everyone shares for these developments has created a sense of complacency that our future energy demands will be easily met. Congress must recognise that we have to stop burning fossil fuels if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change and realise that we have to protect our members in the energy market at the same time. Although there has been progress of late, the GMB must also lead the way in advocating a transition to clean energy and support the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy's excellent work. I ask that the GMB, please, support

this motion and urge the TUED to endorse its aims and make a reasonable financial contribution to this work. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Holly, well done. I call the seconder.

(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)

THE PRESIDENT: Does Southern Region wish to be called in the debate?

BRO. S. H. RAZA (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement. I work for British Gas. I know how important the gas is for heating our homes. I know that gas is a lot cheaper than electricity. That is one of the reasons why it is so popular. There is no doubt that fracking is a very difficult issue, but as a gas union we need to be brave and honest. We must say that for us quickly or easily move away from gas to heat our homes and cook is nonsense. Gas is here to stay for a very long time. Of course, we are the gas union, so that is not a bad thing. We need a considered debate as to where we get our gas from, and that is why the CEC Statement is welcome. We cannot close down the debate on fracking. We need to explore all the issues at stake. It needs to be considered. Let's proceed with caution. Let's vote for the CEC Statement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Syed. Who is next?

BRO. M. ALDRIDGE (North West & Irish): Good morning, Congress and Comrades. I am speaking on the CEC Statement on Fracking. I am a senior shop steward in National Grid Gas, and our members in National Grid provide the gas emergency service. We repair and replace the gas mains' infrastructure in around half the country. Every day, in all weathers, our members in National Grid keep you, your families and our communities safe and warm. I am a gas worker and I know how important gas is to this country. I also know what a wonderful gas infrastructure this country has, an infrastructure that was built in the public sector. I also know what a great fuel gas is. I know that the frack gas is the same gas that we use to heat and cook in our homes. I want to tell you this. Many a gas worker, including myself, share many of your concerns about fracking. We worry about the environmental impact that fracking can have on our communities. Fundamentally, what concerns me, as a socialist, is how long we can go on trying to squeeze more and more out of our planet. All the exploitation of the planet is not for the public good but for the good of the few. This does not just worry me. I am totally opposed to it.

As well as all of my concerns about fracking, I am very conscious that the country needs energy. Our communities need affordable energy, and industries that employ tens of thousands of members need gas.

Coming closer to home, it goes without saying that the members who I represent are dependent on the gas for their livelihoods, and gas needs to come from somewhere. In September of this year, I am proud to say that there will be 439 gas trainees and apprentices in National Grid Training Centres throughout the country — *(Applause)* — and all of them will be direct labour. We intend to ensure that all of them will be joining the union, the GMB. It is a deal that we have done with the GMB which has paved the way for the biggest recruitment drive of direct labour by National Grid in a generation. As I recruit these trainees into the union, I will be very conscious that I have a responsibility to secure the future employment of these workers, and it is not gong to be easy.

Let me say that I am also very proud of the fracking debate that my North West & Irish Region put on earlier this year at Blackpool. The GMB was the honest broker in bringing together those who were for and against fracking. It was a brave decision to put this event on and it was a terrific event. As we move

forward, in line with the CEC Statement, we will need far more debate and engagement on fracking and the whole issue of climate change and energy security. As a gas worker, a GMB senior shop steward and a socialist, I look forward to being part of this debate. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, in response to the CEC Statement, we have to be careful that we are monitoring the impact on our local communities. I am a proud Blackpool resident and we have a big debate going on locally, at the moment. What concerns me most currently is the gung-ho approach that seems to be adopted by our current Government about how we extract the gas, how we monitor and assess where that gas is extracted from. Our Labour MPs put together a 13-point plan which was scrapped. They completely went back on all the recommendations on that. We need to know why that is happening and we need to make sure, as the GMB union, that that gets put back on the agenda at Government level to ensure that that is kept at the forefront of debate.

Labour's stand was a laser-like focus on the safety impacts and on local communities. Fracking has been proposed in areas which have five or 10 times the amount of people in density terms to those where it has already taken place in the US. I look forward to this debate next year because I think we have a long way to go with it. I do support the CEC Statement, but we cannot just take it at any cost. It is not just the jobs that it is going to affect with our members. It is the homes, it is the drilling under my house that they could do tomorrow without my authority. It was not my decision and it was a decision made without my input. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, David. Next.

SIS. N. IQBAL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am a shop steward at British Gas Smart Metering in Leeds. For those of you who know anything about the history of our union, you will know that 125 years ago this year the employers tried to smash our fledgling union in the gas industry. I am proud to report that, 125 years on, having failed to smash our union, the GMB goes from strength to strength in Leeds Smart Metering. *(Applause)* Our site in Leeds that works on smart metering really will be the centre of a revolution in how we use our energy, and GMB is the heart of that revolution. We are the gas union. Organising gas workers is what we do.

Where we get our energy from is important, but we must remember that if, and it is an "if", fracking takes off we need to organise the industry. Let's be honest, if we close off the debate on fracking now, there is no chance that we will be able to have a serious debate with the fracking industry or credibly seek to try and organise workers in the industry. Congress, I urge you to support the CEC Statement. It allows us to carry on the debate on fracking and it also makes clear that we need to be prepared to organise the fracking industry, organising gas workers, improving their health and safety, fighting for their job security and improving pay and pensions in the gas industry is in our DNA. Please support the CEC Statement. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nadia. Next.

SIS E. ROBINSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am from God's County and North Derbyshire Region. *(Applause)* I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I am aware that this is a controversial issue, but I support the CEC and my colleagues that we should open and continue the debate on this subject. I work for British Gas as the only female commercial gas engineer, and most people are not aware that the gas that we heat our homes and businesses with does not come from the UK, making it expensive and leaving us vulnerable to countries that supply us. In an ever-changing world, this is not necessarily a good thing.

We must remember that a lot of important, realistic issues are matters that people seem to forget in this discussion. The demand for a gas supply to heat homes and water is phenomenal, and no other energy source can be supplied to meet the current demand. Gas is the cleanest of all the fossil fuels. Households are struggling to pay their bills, never mind the additional cost of what it would be to upgrade, maintain and repair appliances. Of course, you can get a plan from us at British Gas to help with that. Let's be honest. The renewable option is a great idea in principle, but in reality there is still a long way to travel on that road. There are hundreds of thousands of people employed within the gas industry from offshore, to networks, to office staff, metering installers and, of course, not forgetting the guys and girls like myself who turn up in flying vans, abseiling with the A-Team theme tune playing in the background. (*Laughter*) Also British Gas contributes to the economy and actually pays tax instead of using the tax-avoidance schemes favoured by some larger companies. There are in excess of 13,000 GMB members in British Gas, a figure that continues to grow. So a decline in the gas supply would be hugely destructive to the economy, the union and would devastate thousands of lives.

Fracking could provide a supply which would be cheaper and see us through until the renewable world catches up. I believe it can be safe, as long as it is monitored and regulated correctly and that there are sites around the world successfully doing this.

THE PRESIDENT: Elizabeth, your time is up.

SIS. E. ROBINSON: I appreciate that no-one wants this on their doorstep, but there must be sites in the UK where this could be done. Great numbers in the population use gas, and we must supply it somehow. Realistically, at the moment, this is our only viable option.

THE PRESIDENT: Elizabeth! Your time is up! Thank you. (*Applause*) I have a resolution to it all. Let's do the fracking under No. 10 and Parliament. (*Cheers*) How many of us want it on our doorstep?

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): I don't know a lot about fracking, but recently someone came to my house and offered me to buy a friendly thing for the environment called an air-heat pump. I had a gas boiler that was perfect and was running well, but this guy convinced us that it was good for the environment. What they didn't tell me was that it cost me 25% extra in electricity to run it. So I will stick with the gas. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Pat.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): Congress and President, regarding fracking, I would say that all of us who are in this hall now, as Mary just said — she took my thunder away — how many of us would have it on our doorstep? Again, there are many products out *there* today that we are learning about that are killers, like the asbestos. Someone also said smoking and the cigarettes that they used to advertise on telly. I have seen many documents on telly about fracking and some parts are being covered up for you not to see it, such as when gas is coming out of taps, waters polluted and everything. I just don't trust anyone no more, only the trade unions which have good health and safety policies. Again, how much information will we get off the Government for the public about the benefits and dangers of it? I don't think we will get any. It will be the euro. They will only tell us what they want us to hear. Again, there are still hundreds of thousands of homes out *there* — I know there are in Dagenham and Barking — which are falling apart, which could have been insulated, looked after and they wouldn't use half as much energy as they do. I would ask you to be careful of the fracking. Thank you.

SIS. M. GRIFFITHS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Congress, I am a senior shop steward and a smart-meter installer for British Gas. I am delighted to say that we have 1,500 members

now in British Gas Smart Metering. In my own area, we have a density of 93%. (*Applause*) Our workforce is predominantly young and high levels of union density demonstrate that young workers do join unions. I work in the gas industry and I share many of the concerns of the people in this room about fracking. We have all seen the negative publicity from American on fracking, and we need to say very clearly that the concerns over fracking are legitimate. The Government's gung-ho approach to fracking and failure to properly engage communities to discuss the pros and cons of fracking have done huge damage to the industry before it has even started. The point is, and let's remember, Congress, that this industry isn't an industry yet. We don't even know if it is viable.

The CEC Statement is balanced. We need to keep debating this issue. I know as well anybody that we need gas in this country and will do for decades to come. It has to come from somewhere. We also need to be very clear that we would never support any industry at any cost. We won't support fracking in areas that could threaten our communities or contaminate our water supplies. The CEC Statement sets out all of the difficult issues that we need to confront around energy, and gas in particular. It is sober, honest and challenging. Let's support the CEC Statement and move the debate forward. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Monica. Next.

BRO. B. JONES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am a senior shop steward for P.H. Jones, which is a social housing business of British Gas. Congress, the CEC Statement on Fracking is sober, balanced and it reminds us all of the pure realities about gas. The reason why so many people in social housing use gas for heating and cooking is that it is four times cheaper than electricity. If we don't have gas heating in our homes, we would have to fit electric heating at a cost of thousands, and then watch the bills to heat our homes go up fourfold. That is not realistic, and if any political party had put this in their manifesto, or any special interest group which advocated replacing gas heating with electric heating, would be dropping a clanger, be ridiculed and rightly so. There is no way that the GMB would ever advocate a policy that would drive even more fuel poverty and lead to even more pensioners freezing of cold in the winter periods.

Congress, I don't have time to develop the argument, and Mary will not let me, why gas will be crucial to reducing carbon emissions, but in the very near future we hope that in our industry we will start deploying combined heat and power units, like they already have in hundreds of thousands of homes in Japan. They are units with very low emissions, they heat homes but, crucially, they also generate electricity. Imagine a situation where we could put units in hundreds of thousands of homes that give the poorest families cheap heating and free electricity, where this is possible. Fitting these types of units will also keep thousands of our skilled gas engineers in jobs. Congress, behind combined heat and power is the Holy Grail of fuel cells that will heat homes and generate electricity using gas without producing any emissions.

The truth is, Congress, that the renewable sector so far produces little in the way of jobs for working-class people. With combined heat and power and fuel cells we may have a revolutionary form of technology that is fantastic news to those who are struggling to pay their bills, something that is good for the environment and brilliant for maintaining skilled jobs. Congress, gas will be with us for decades to come. Gas will, probably, be at the centre of the revolution in how we heat our homes. All this throws up the issues of where we are going to get our gas from because we are increasingly dependent on gas imports. The CEC Statement is balanced on this matter and forces us to face up to some really tough issues. I urge Congress to support my industry and the CEC Statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Brian. You nearly got away with that debate. Anyone else?

SIS. S. YATES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am proud to stand *here* and say that I was born and bred in Stoke-on-Trent, which, as you all know, is the Potteries. I am one of 4,000 members of the Ceramic Unity Union which merged with the GMB earlier this year. *(Applause)* I have worked as a china pot handler at Dunning Ceramics for the past 23 years and I have witnessed the rise and fall of the pottery industry, which has, basically, had its heart ripped out. The ceramics industry has been under sustained pressure for many decades now and we have lost thousands of highly-skilled jobs due to this. The pressure on our great industry continues today. Our jobs have been sent overseas for a couple of decades now, as the industry took advantage of cheaper labour abroad. Companies stamp pottery made abroad to make it seem as if it had been made in the UK, and this is still an on-going fight now with the black stamping.

Finally, we have started to grow again, but this will still be threatened if the cost of energy to the industry rises. So one of the key issues our industry faces is getting access to secure, affordable supplies of energy and specifically gas. Our industry has lobbied for getting more gas storage because we are usually vulnerable to sharp increases in gas prices. We appreciate that fracking is controversial and the CEC Statement recognises this fact. The CEC Statement is balanced and lays out clearly the economic realities of gas and the importance it plays in UK-owned and British industry. The truth is, Congress, that industries like ceramics depend on gas and will do so for many decades to come. This means, to secure my job and those of 4,000 other ceramic workers, we need secure supplies of gas. Let's not kid ourselves that relying heavily on gas imported from places like Russia and Qatar are ethical, environmentally friendly or, crucially, secure.

Unity merged with the GMB to strengthen and influence any future decisions in debates like this on fracking. For us this debate is about energy security and affordability of jobs. You all unknowingly use ceramic-industry products every day, even if it is your first cup of tea in the morning or taking a bath. Let's keep it that way. Let's ensure that our ceramic industry can keep its identity. So, please, support the CEC Statement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sharon. Next?

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, I am going to comment on the CEC Statement on Fracking. I am for GMB members having jobs. No one is against the gas industry. That's a non-starter. What I am for is energy efficiency. Quite some time ago I was involved in establishing an energy village. I contacted every energy company without exception as I wanted to talk about energy efficiency. Without exception, I was directed to the marketing department. They just see energy efficiency as a way of marketing units of energy. To me, the priority should be energy efficiency, regardless of whether it is gas or electricity. The amount of inefficiency out *there* needs to be addressed, and not just of fracking. Even before we start thinking of other ways of getting gas and oil out of the ground, we need to be more efficient in what we are doing. I am in support of the CEC Statement. Thank you.

BRO. S. McCUE (GMB Scotland): President and Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement. I am a shop steward in Scottish Gas. Why do the vast majority of people in this room have gas central heating? It's because it is efficiency, clean and far, far cheaper than electricity. The fact is that electricity is going to get more expensive than gas in years to come. Let nobody forget that fuel poverty is a real issue in our country. The gas industry also generates hundreds of thousands of jobs for the UK economy. Let me tell you that 150,000 people are directly employed in the offshore industry in the oil and gas sector, with a further 300,000 jobs in the supply chain. We have tens of thousands of gas workers, the vast majority of them being GMB members in the gas distribution industry, working in Wales & West Utilities, SGN, Northern

Gas Networks and the National Grid. We also have 13,000 members in British Gas, including 8,000 engineers like myself.

This year, between British Gas Smart Metering and the service business, which is where I work, we are looking to creating more than a thousand traineeships and apprenticeships. These are real jobs for working-class people up and down the country. What other industry is creating skilled jobs and apprenticeships on this scale? So gas heats our homes, provides hundreds of thousands of skilled jobs, it is efficient, comparatively cheap and clean and will be with us for decades to come. So the question is: where are we going to get our gas from? Do we carry it across the oceans in container ships from Qatar or in pipelines in Siberia? Do we think that transporting gas across oceans and continents is environmentally sound or ethical? Of course not. It may suit some to extract gas tens of thousands of miles away, out of sight and out of mind, but is that really the way that we should behave, or should we be taking on responsibility for our own carbon emissions? This is a difficult and contentious issue that we face on fracking, and it will not be dissolved by sloganeering or pretending that we have simple solutions.

Congress, the CEC Statement is balanced and sensible. Support skilled jobs in the gas industry, support honest debate on fracking and gas and support the CEC Statement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Is there anyone else who wants to speak? *(No response)* I think that we have given a fair crack of the whip to this debate. Gary, do you want the right to reply? *(Declined)* Thank you, Gary, very much.

BRO. G. SMITH (National Secretary, Commercial Services): Congress, the CEC is asking that Motions 337 and 338 are referred. We have heard the CEC Statement. It is not a pro-fracking statement. I am not going to re-rehearse all the debates. We need to carry on this debate and we need to carry on engaging with the industry.

President, on Motion 335 the CEC is also asking for the motion to be referred. We have both engaged with TUED, and we have our differences with TUED, but we can, none the less, ensure or urge the TUC to endorse the aims of TUED. What is unclear in the motion is whether it is asking the GMB to make a reasonable contribution to TUED or not. If it is asking us to make a donation, then that is a matter for the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee. If the motion is calling for the TUC to make a financial contribution to TUED, this would be difficult if the GMB is not contributing financial support ourselves. Those are the reasons why we are asking for Motion 335 to be referred.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Gary. Does London Region accept reference back? *(Agreed)* Does Midlands Region accept reference? *(Agreed)* Finally, does GMB Wales & South West accept reference? *(Agreed)* Does Congress accept those references? *(Agreed)* I will put all of those to the vote. All those in favour, please show?

Motion 337 was Referred.

Motion 338 was Referred.

Motion 335 was Referred.

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is supporting Motion 334. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Motion 334 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I now put the CEC Statement on Fracking to Congress. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

The CEC Statement on Fracking was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We are now going to deal with Motions 228, 229 and Composite 7.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP & CONTROL

AN ALTERNATIVE TO RE-NATIONALISATION WITHIN THE WATER INDUSTRY MOTION 228

228. AN ALTERNATIVE TO RE-NATIONALISATION WITHIN THE WATER INDUSTRY

This Congress notes, Dwy Cymru Welsh Water is a not for profit company which is funded by bond holders who are guaranteed a low percentage annual interest payment for their investment.

Dwr Cymru operates purely to invest profit back into the organisation and help reduce bills to its customers and therefore our members as bill payers.

Customers have seen continuous below inflation bill rises since conception.

The company model is supported by a Welsh Labour Government. This does not mean our members have not suffered since privatisation. The same as any other water company due to OFWAT still dealing with us the same as private companies.

Part of the reason this model works is the approach of the Trade Unions and company with our working together agreement which helps the company achieve many of its targets but with our participation our reward is RPI pay increases no compulsory redundancy clause and other terms and conditions. This is renegotiated every A.M.P. period (this is a five year period which OFWAT gives the companies to spend in).

Dwr Cymru now has 2500 employees due to in sourcing core activities that had been outsourced under the old regime.

The regulator does not believe in the model as they believe it does not give enough back to the customer they would prefer to go down the route of the Cave Report.

However, Congress believes that the report is unworkable as you do not get dirty gas or electricity but you can get dirty water. You can live without gas or electricity for a period of time but not water.

If competition was enforced, where would responsibilities lie as domestic customers cannot be shut off for non-payment? It would also leave customers with the possibility of a drinking water bill and a sewerage bill because of competition.

This may not be the perfect model but would reduce risk and pressure on government if the industry was re-nationalised.

I call upon Congress to support this motion to put an end to fat cat profiteering, asset stripping companies with a clear message to both the Government and regulator of

BEEEN THERE, DONE THAT, DON'T WORK!

(Referred)

**CARDIFF WATER BRANCH
Wales & South West Region**

BRO. P. HUNT (GMB Wales and South West): President and Congress, I move Motion 228 — An Alternative to Re-Nationalisation within the Water Industry. Dwy Cymru Welsh Water is a not for profit company, owned by Glas Cymru, a group of bondholders who are guaranteed a low percentage annual interest payment for their investment. Dwy Cymru operates purely to invest profit back into the organisation and help reduce bills to its customers and therefore our members as bill payers. We are also able to borrow money at record low interest rates due to a better than AAA credit rating to meet its investment targets. Our customers have seen continuous below inflation rises for five consecutive years.

Our company model is supported by a Welsh Labour Government. This does not mean our members have not suffered since privatisation. We have suffered the same as any other water company through outsourcing and continuous cutbacks. We do, however, have a multi-trade union agreement called *Working Together*, which has been in operation for many years offering stable pay increases, no compulsory redundancies and has a more flexible approach for the company. This is not a perfect agreement and it has not always been perfect for our members, but it has provided some stability with still a fair package of terms and conditions. The agreement has just been re-negotiated to meet the new challenges that our companies and members face.

Dwr Cymru currently employs more than 2,500 staff and in recent years has been in-sourcing back into the company to meet the core activity targets set by the regulator.

Our members' and the company's biggest challenge in recent years has been the regulator, who continues to drive us down the competition route for a small payback to both customers and the effect it causes on our members. The regulator does not believe in our model as they believe it does not give enough back to the customer. The regulator would prefer to go down the route outlined in the Cave Report. However, we believe that that model is unworkable as you do not get dirty gas or electricity but you can have dirty water. You can also live without gas and electricity for a period of time, but not without water.

If competition was enforced, where would the responsibilities lie? Congress, this may not be the perfect model but it would reduce the risk and pressures that Government would face if the industry was re-nationalised.

I call on Congress to support this motion to put an end to fat-cat profiteering, asset stripping by companies with a clear message to both the Government and regulator of BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, IT DON'T WORK! I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder?

BRO. N. EVANS (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 228: An Alternative to Re-Nationalisation Within the Water Industry.

President and Congress, as a trade union we will always campaign and support the call for re-nationalisation. However, given the current political climate, this is unlikely to happen in the short to medium term. The Welsh Water model is not perfect by any means, and our members have suffered equally like other colleagues throughout the water industry. Our *Working Together Agreement* is a joint agreement between management and the trade unions, and it does give our members some form of stability for each five-year period. We have just secured pay protection of a minimum of a 1½% rise or CPI if greater for the next five years. Our company model, as a not-for-profit organisation, also benefits our customers but it also benefits our members as customers.

As a trade union, we must continue to fight OFWAT's determination to force competition on companies trying to do the right thing for their customers and employees whilst remaining competitive and delivering value for money and service to our customers. Please support this motion. I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 229.

NATIONAL GOVERNANCE OF WATER INDUSTRY MOTION 229

229. NATIONAL GOVERNANCE OF WATER INDUSTRY

This Congress agrees that the GMB applies pressure upon the new government to ensure that the UK water industry is governed and managed to provide robust and safe standards for its employees, our members, and the wider public; not merely setting one water company against the next in the name of competition.

LEICESTER WATER BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. EVANS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 229 — National Governance of Water Industry. President, every five years our members in the water industry are put through the uncertainties and upheaval of the regulatory price reviews and the five-yearly asset-management plans. Whilst this process claims to have the honourable intentions of ensuring that our water providers are held to account for their prices and standards, in reality these reviews normally generate opportunities for the water companies to seek redundancies and outsourcing of service provision. As a result of the 2014 review, over 2,000 water employees have been made redundant in the lead-up to March 2015. Since water privatisation in 1989 the numbers of employees in the industry has halved. Those who remain see an increased burden of workload to the extent where standards of service often suffer, whilst our bills, as customers, still increase.

Despite attempts to engage with the regulators ahead of their recommendations, they just don't want to know. This is not acceptable any longer. The GMB is the union for water workers and we must have a voice to ensure that any future change maintains employment standards as well as standards of service. This motion asks Congress to support pressure being applied upon those who govern our water industry to ensure that the realities of these five-year reorganisations are in the interests of our members. After all, we are also all customers. The current so-called moves for competition within the water industry tend only to serve to set one company against the other in a race to the bottom on standards. It does little to ensure the efficient management of water resources at a national level. For many years our existing policy has been to seek public ownership of the water industry. Until this is achieved, we must play our part in influencing the strategy of this essential service. Please support. I move. (Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

SIS. V. WASS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (Applause) I am seconding Motion 229 — National Governance of Water Industry.

President and Congress, we all rely on the hard work and dedication of our members within the water industry 24/7 every day. We expect our water supply to be of the highest standard, and these are best upheld by the workers and their representatives who deliver this essential service. It is, therefore, vital that these workers are included when strategy for change is formulated and proposed. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Composite 7.

**EAST COAST MAIN LINE AND THE RE-NATIONALISATION OF THE RAILWAYS
COMPOSITE 7**

(Covering Motions 230 and 231)

(230 — East Coast Main Line (London Region))

(231 — Re-Nationalisation of the Railways (Southern Region))

EAST COAST MAIN LINE AND THE RE-NATIONALISATION OF THE RAILWAYS

Congress deplores the reprivatisation of the East Coast line. After the complete failure, time and again of the private sector to run the East Coast Line, it was taken back in to public ownership. Since then it has become more efficient, well run and is returning money back to the exchequer.

The East Coast Line has blown away the myth that private is good and public is bad. It shows that without the need to make profits and pay dividends to shareholders, that a publicly run Railway System works well and provides better value for money.

This Congress believes that the current privatised railways system is not giving value for money and reaffirms its view that the railways should be taken back into public ownership as a matter of urgency.

The Congress calls on for the Labour Party/Government to re-nationalise all the railways in Britain and calls on the GMB to raise this again with the Labour Party and to urge them to pursue this as a major priority.

**Southern Region
London Region**

**to Move
to Second**

(Carried)

BRO. F. DALY (Southern): Congress, I move Composition Motion 7 — East Coast Main Line and the Re-Nationalisation of the Railways. We all know that the privatised railways are not giving us value for money. In fact, each franchise as it goes bust just walks away with no penalty at all. So there is never any recompense to the taxpayer, who are paying big money to companies for giving a rubbish service.

After the East Coast Line repeatedly failed under the private-sector company, it was taken back into public ownership. It then became efficient and effective and delivered a good railway service on the East Coast Line. Hundreds of millions of pounds were paid back to the Exchequer through this publicly owned company. Now, unfortunately, it has been taken back into the private sector, and the public will now have to pay the bill. The private sector were the only people who could bid for this franchise. The public sector was not allowed to bid. The reason is that on a level playing field the public sector will beat the private sector every time.

All the time the public are paying more and more for fares and it is costing each of us money to travel to work every day. Unfortunately, there is nothing to be done with this current Administration, but what we really want to do is have all of the candidates who are currently running for the Labour leadership to have, as part of their platform, to re-nationalise the railways with no compensation to the private sector. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Frank. Secunder?

BRO. R. BARRON (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am a commuter, a taxpayer, a citizen and a proud GMB member. I travel on the railways daily to work to

represent working people for better pay, terms and conditions, to have money to enable them to pay for things like travel costs. The rich don't travel on the railways; they own them!

I am, as are you, a proud trade unionist. As proud trade unionists, we are required to pay the tickets and the money into the pockets of these fat cats and billionaires. These cats grow fat on the private gravy train, whilst workers and passengers are left on the platforms. The Tory-Thatcher cult stole our family silver to make their gold. This time it is to reclaim that which was stolen from us. Public ownership means that our money is invested in our railways for us, for our families, for our communities and workers. It is time to pull the communication chord on the gravy train and take back our railways. Please support the motion. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Dave Clements on behalf of the CEC to speak on Motion 228.

BRO. D. CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress and President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, asking you to refer Motion 228. The motion draws attention to the fact that the Welsh water model is preferable to the private profiteering of, for example, the Thames Water Private Equity Ownership model. GMB knows that the privatisation of our utilities across the board has largely led to increased and unfair pricing on customers' bills. It has also encouraged privately-owned companies to attempt to dismantle workers' terms and conditions in the name of profit. The motion also correctly condemns the Cave's Report recommendation to introduce increased competition into the water industry. There is no doubt that there is an issue with the way that the water industry in the UK is structured. Since privatisation 26 years ago customers' bills have risen in real terms by 42%. However, the motion does not take into account GMB's long-standing policy for the water industry to be returned to full public ownership.

Both Scottish Water and Northern Ireland Water operate under different models of ownership to Welsh Water and the fully privatised water companies. This model of operation outlined in this motion does, however, raise interesting questions as to how we may approach the steps we need to take to ensure the re-nationalisation of the water industry. It is highly unlikely that this Tory Government will have this high up on the political agenda. What is sensible, however, is the senior shop stewards who work in and across the water industry to fully investigate the not-for-profit model as well as other models and lead on the campaign for a fairer water industry.

The CEC, therefore, believes that referral of the motion would allow GMB's National Water Forum to fully consider these issues. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Does GMB Wales and South West Region accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) We will now take the vote. The CEC is supporting all three motions. All those in favour of Motions 228, 229 and Composite 7, please show? Anyone against? Thank you. They were carried.

Motion 228 was Referred..

Motion 229 was Carried.

Composite 7 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. We now come to agenda item 8: Social Policy: Transport. I call London Region to move Motion 360; Southern Region to move Motion 367; London Region to move Motion 368 and London Region, again, to move Motion 370.

I have just been reminded that the RMA is selling their raffle tickets on Exhibition stand 11. Please support them.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

MOTOR INSURANCE UNFAIR PRACTICE MOTION 360

360. MOTOR INSURANCE UNFAIR PRACTICE

Congress agrees the sordid practice of insurance companies using damages to windscreens as part of a no claims discount when calculating premiums should be challenged, and should be removed from any aspect of claims. To charge for a matter beyond control of any motorist is unacceptable.

Also motor insurers should not penalise drivers for their past points. Insurers use past points on licences that have been dismissed by the normal course of time for up to two years after the offence has been removed.

Congress agrees to enlist GMB sponsored MPs to pursue this in Parliament.

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. S. RUSH (London): Congress, I move Motion 360, Motor Insurance Unfair Practice. The majority of you in this hall will have motor insurance or have had motor insurance or have had motor insurance in the past. Many of you, possibly, have not noticed the changes or penalties that have appeared in the last few years, changes and adjustments that you cannot argue with or, in many cases, even understand. Welcome to the dastardly world of insurance.

Windscreen cover, as many of you know, is a very important aspect of car insurance. We all need it and many of you will have claimed on your clean insurance for anything from a small chip to a totally cracked windscreen. These claims are usually occurrences beyond your control, such as debris from a passing lorry or a cracked windscreen after encountering a large unseen pothole. You, first, feel a jolt, followed by some swearing and, usually, on seeing the crack slide across your windscreen, your demeanour, obviously, changes. When, later on, you telephone to make a claim, this, again, could produce more swearing as you then realise that you did not tick the box and now have to pay an unnerving fee for an excess. It is at this point that you realise that windscreen cover is not fully covered within your policy. Sometimes, even when you have renewed with the insurance, your insurer has craftily changed the terms of the cover. While they have informed you about your renewal, human nature is that a renewal is a renewal and things will not have changed.

Here is something that you were probably not aware of. Fault or non-fault windscreen replacement is now considered a claim regardless and can affect your renewal premium. In some cases, certain insurers may not even consider you when being quoted for an alternative provider.

Here is another one of their nasty tricks. You must advise your insurer that you have had an incident, even minor, where no financial loss to them is incurred. This will still be held against you. Insurers employ individuals to look at the chances of accidents. If you seem to have many faults or non-faults, they will add a load into your premium.

How about this scenario? It is that time of year when you receive your renewal documentation. There is a hefty increase in your premium and, understandably, you call the insurer to find out why. "You had a

claim six months ago”, says the over-joyful telephone call-centre operator. “No, I did not.” “Oh, yes. That driver damaged my back bumper while I was parked up in that quiet residential street.” You then remember. There was a claim but not on your insurance, but you still pay more.

So the question, Congress, why are completely innocent motorists — that is all of us — have to suffer the indignity of increased premiums when the Central Insurance Database logs that there was a claim but not on your insurance?

Points for speeding, so I’ll speed up. In three years, as far as the authorities are concerned, those speeding points will come off your record, but not the insurance companies. They will penalise you for spent, minor driving convictions for anything up to five years. How can this iniquity exist, where the insurer holds a motorist to a higher standard than the law of the land? We, at the Professional Drivers Branch, request that Congress enlists political help to pursue this matter in Parliament at the earliest opportunity as, after all, has anyone ever heard of a poor insurance company? The answer is no. They are money-grabbing corporations feeding off the hard working citizens of this country. We propose that unfair charges based on non-fault accidents and claims, as well as morally-corrupt enhanced premiums for spent convictions are ruled illegal. We want pressure brought to bear on insurers to end this unfair and dishonourable practice of increasing premiums accordingly. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Simon. Secunder?

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Congress, I second Motion 360. As the motion explains, the motorist in this country has been victimised in more than one way. There are odd traffic laws and on-the-spot fines which are enforced by the police. Reasonable people are happy to pay up if they have committed an offence. However, the motorists are now being punished more than once for committing a motoring offence. We take on our insurance policies for peace of mind and to protect us. Insurance companies are punishing us when points have been dismissed by law. It seems that they are bigger than the law itself. Speaking of kicking you while you are down, some companies have now included damages to windscreens as part of their calculation for a no-claims’ discount, even though such damages are beyond the driver’s control. These two practices are entirely unfair to motorists, so we must pressure companies to act more responsibly and fairly towards the consumers. I call upon our MPs to pursue these matters in Parliament, to ensure that insurance companies do their job to protect and not to punish. I second.
(Applause)

SECOND RUNWAY AT GATWICK MOTION 367

367. SECOND RUNWAY AT GATWICK

The arguments for a second runway at Gatwick, There will be an estimated 40,000 new homes needed. Gatwick themselves have said about 7,000 would have to be built. The airport has stated an extra 17,500 jobs could be created and if you add non-aviation jobs that would rise to 35,000. Gatwick expansion would also raise an estimated £80 Billion pounds in to economy.

The GMB has around 1000 members working in and around Gatwick local communities; We would strive to see this grow.

Although the airports commission will back only one, there is an argument for two. For an international airport like Gatwick to ignore the GMB and by doing so letting down the local community and workers that depend on its services is criminal. It is essential that Gatwick work with the GMB union putting member’s interests at the forefront.

“To this end we call upon Congress, to support our campaign to draw Gatwick Airport LTD into trade union discussions, to support a second runway at Gatwick that will benefit our great union and our members who live and work around the Airport. “

Colleagues we thank you.

B23 BRITISH AIRWAYS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 367 — Second Runway at Gatwick. Congress, there is, and has been for several years, a need to increase airport capacity for London and the South-East. This expansion is vital to the UK in general. Several options are currently under consideration by the Airports Commission. They seem to boil down to two choices: expansion through an additional runway at Heathrow or through construction of a second runway at Gatwick. A compelling case can be made for the choice of Gatwick. The expansion of Gatwick through a second runway will cost half as much as Heathrow, £8 billion as opposed to £16 billion. This cost saving will, in turn, be passed on to airlines and passengers with lower charges for airport use. As we are constantly being reminded by the Tories, we live in times of austerity. Importantly, Gatwick’s plans do not involve taxpayers’ money.

Generally, airports are engines of economic growth. Specifically, Gatwick will be more effective than Heathrow in delivering economic growth. Expansion of Gatwick will be worth around £90 billion for the UK economy, creating around 120,000 jobs, both directly and indirectly through knock-on effects. An expanded Gatwick will also be more effective as a UK-regional and international hub, delivering greater connectivity than rival plans.

The environmental impact of any airport expansion or construction is, of course, the subject of concern and consideration. The expansion of Gatwick will affect hundreds of thousands fewer people than alternative plans elsewhere. Gatwick’s plans guarantee that it will continue to meet all noise and air-quality targets, and will be carbon neutral by at least 2040. Gatwick also enjoys superior road and rail connections, and there is scope to improve these still further. The planned expansion of Gatwick presents opportunities that the country cannot afford to lose. It has the smallest environmental impact as well. Motion 367 calls on the GMB to support these plans.

Expansion of Gatwick also provides us with opportunities as a union. Organisation is already strong. We have over one thousand members whose jobs are connected with Gatwick. Motion 367 also calls on the GMB to build on these foundations. We should make it a priority to gain recognition from Gatwick Airport Limited. This should be a priority as it is the company that will be responsible for the expansion. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call the seconder.

SIS. N. PENN (Southern): This is my first-time at Congress and I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you, GMB, for allowing me to take part in my first Congress, and I hope it is the first of many. Also, thank you to the Southern Region for the support and encouragement you have given me.

I would like to speak in favour of this motion. Let us open up opportunities for GMB members, workers and the local community. Let’s build the economy in this area by opening up a second runway at Gatwick Airport. Congress, I second this motion.

INDIGNITY OF PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED PASSENGERS TRAVELLING THROUGH STANSTED AIRPORT
MOTION 368

368. INDIGNITY OF PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED PASSENGERS TRAVELLING THROUGH STANSTED AIRPORT

Congress notes passengers with limited mobility are being disadvantaged by a lack of facilities at Stansted Airport, due to the race to the bottom caused by the lower bids being made by contractors who win the contracts are unrealistically low.

This results in low levels of service, shortage of staffing levels and worsening T's and C's for our members.

All too often, disabled passengers are being left on inbound aircraft for an unreasonable amount of time, because of the lack of staff employed by the contractors. On a number of occasions disabled passengers have been assisted off aircraft by cabin crew and handling staff, in order not to delay the outbound boarding process and left exposed to inclement weather whilst waiting for assistance they need to travel through immigration.

Passengers on outbound flights regularly are left, at departure gates for long periods of time, and arrive at flights late, due to staff shortages.

I urge this Congress to campaign, that we insist that local airport authorities assist in supplementary payments to help eradicate this problem.

STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH,
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. OSWICK (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*
Before I start, may I just say what a great night it was last night. *(Applause)*

I am moving Motion 368 — Indignity of Physically Impaired Passengers Travelling Through Stansted Airport. Congress notes that passengers with limited mobility are being disadvantaged by a lack of facilities at Stansted Airport. Recently, I heard a motivating speech by a 91 year-old war veteran called Harry Smith at the Labour Party Conference. Harry inspired me to stand before you today to speak to you now. All too often I experience elderly passengers being asked, “Will you be able to leave this aircraft, Madam?” or Sir. They leave the aircraft unassisted but because the passengers do not want to be a burden, they try. So often they are then left waiting for assistance in inclement weather. This is caused, all too often, due to the contractors winning contracts with unrealistically low bids. We are seeing a race to the bottom. It is a culture that we must eradicate. This results in more zero-hours contracts, low minimum wages, low levels of service, shortages of staffing levels and worsening T&Cs for our members. Because of staffing shortages, passengers are left at outbound gates for up to two hours without assistance. As a society, what message are we giving to these people. They are unfortunate enough to be stuck in a wheelchair for long periods of time, let alone being stuck without assistance. Rather than promoting and supporting physically impaired passengers to travel, this situation could impact on passenger numbers from travelling through our airports. I urge Congress to campaign that the GMB insist that local airport authorities invest in holding areas with facilities and supplementary payments to the contractors to help eradicate these problems. This would allow the likes of Harry Smith and others, who gave so much for this country in the war, to travel with comfort and dignity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wayne. Well done. Secunder?

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): President and Congress, I second Motion 368. I second this motion as a frequent traveller by air. I am disappointed to hear the disabled and elderly, and people who need help,

are still having problems at Stansted. Am I to assume that this situation is nationwide or just at Stansted? When flying you hear staff saying, “Can the disabled, elderly and families come first?”, so you assume that they are being looked after. Is this not the case, Wayne, because Wayne works at the airport so he knows? At the end of the flight, again, staff say, “People who need help, remain seated”. You assume, again, that they are being supported. We, at Congress, ask the CEC to look into this issue and help to support these vulnerable people. Thank you.

PARKING ON PAVEMENTS MOTION 370

370. PARKING ON PAVEMENTS

Congress agrees that the parking of cars on pavements is a danger and poses risks to people, particularly the disabled. This inconsiderate parking prevents wheelchair users and the blind from staying safely on the pavement and forces them into the roadway.

There is a national ban on cycling on pavements, so why are cars allowed to drive and park on pavements?

Some authorities such as Exeter, prohibit parking on pavements and actively enforce this. Others have a similar policy but do not enforce.

Buildings have to be DDA compliant so why not our pavements?

This motion calls on this Union to put safety first and campaign for a national ban on parking on pavements.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH, *London Region*

(Carried)

BRO. S. FRANKLIN (London): There’s no good turning the lights on, Mary, because I will not see them. *(Laughter and applause)* Congress, I move Motion 370 — Parking on Pavements. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

President and Congress, I have a question. Is it against the law to park on the pavement? Answer: Yes, it is. Section 34 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act says it is. Question: Is this law enforceable by the police? Yes, it is. Question: Do they enforce this law? No! The law states that driving on to pavements is against the law, but this law seems to incorporate something called “a grey area”, and this grey area is the distance between the parked vehicle, be it a car, van or lorry, and a fence, a wall or anything that is on the other side of the car. It should suffice for a wheelchair, a person with walking aids, a mum with a pushchair or someone like myself who uses the aid of a guide dog. I was walking with my dog and she stopped, as she is trained to do, if there is an obstacle on the path in front of us. With the aid of my cane, I discovered a car parked across the pavement. So I turned the dog to the road, made sure that it was safe to proceed, I asked the dog to go forward, to go around the car to the pavement as quickly as possible. To my horror, there were three cars parked. There was I, with traffic piling up behind me and coming towards me, but my faithful and lovely dog took me safely round and back on to the pavement. Let me tell you that this was one scary moment.

Colleagues, imagine how dangerous this would be for a wheelchair, a person with walking aids or a mum with a child in a pushchair. Guide Dogs are, currently, campaigning for a laws to outlaw parking on all pavements in streets except where specially designated. A Bill was presented to the last Parliament by Guide Dogs and 18 other charitable organisations, including Living Streets, which is an 85-year old charity that works tirelessly for the rights of pedestrians. This Bill was to make provision for the safety, convenience and free movement of disabled people, elderly people, people with children and other

pavement users, and would clarify and simplify the law of parking on the pavement. This subject is as important for the present Government as for the old government.

If the law for parking on pavements can be implemented and worked by a few authorities in places such as the Met in London, Thames Valley Police and Exeter Council, who have a complete ban on all pavement parking, and actively enforced, then why not all of them? In doing so, they could also generate a tremendous amount of revenue from fines. Over £1 billion is spent every year on the repairs to pavements where cars and other vehicles have driven over them. This motion asks our Executive Council to put safety first and campaign for a ban on pavement parking. Congress, I ask for your support on this motion. Remember, roads were built for cars to move on; pavements were built for people to walk on in safety. Thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

SIS. M. MALONE (London): President and Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am proud to second Motion 370: Parking on Pavements. Colleagues, I completely endorse the mover's comments about parking on pavements. It would appear that, apart from the Met Police, Thames Valley Police and Exeter Council, everybody else is prepared to sign up to the *Car is King Movement*.

I had to witness my late son, who had impaired vision due to an illness, try to negotiate pavements with blocked cars. I will give you an example. We were walking on the pavement when a car driver sounded his horn at us to get out of his way. He needed more room to park. For those of you who know me, you can imagine my response. For those of you who don't, Mary won't let me tell you until after 9 o'clock. (*Laughter*) I had to witness wheelchair users trying to struggle up and down kerbs because inconsiderate parking prohibited them the use of dropped kerbs. I had to witness mothers and carers having to push prams and buggies down kerbs and walk out into busy roads — No, forget that, colleagues. They were dangerous roads — to negotiate blocked pavements. I understand that the CEC wants to make a qualification on this motion to the effect that it is okay to park on pavements in narrow streets to prevent accidents. My branch accepts this qualification because we don't want to lose the motion. Colleagues, if narrow streets are unsafe for cars, how much more unsafe are they for the blind, disabled and mothers with children? (*Applause*)

The mover mentioned the Road Traffic Act of 1988 as a catalyst for preventing parking on pavements. I can go further back. I can go back to before cars were invented. The Highways Act of 1835 expressly prohibits vehicles pulled by man, horse or oxen to drive on the pavement. That law has not been repealed, so it must apply to cars. I am happy to second this motion and ask the CEC if they wish to reconsider their stance. Madam President, this law is still in force. Pavements are for pedestrians and non-car users. Thank you. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Maureen. Congress, I have no idea how many people wish to come into this total debate, which has been very emotive in some cases. I am going to suspend the debate in that event until this afternoon sometime. I am sorry, Roy. Does Congress agree to that? (*Agreed*) Time is now running out because we have had some big debates on fracking and other things.

Before we move on to the next item, I would like to welcome visitors from Asda's Retail Labour Relations and Policy Team who are with us in the Hall. They are the Vice President, Mike Gooddie; Senior Director, Alison Long; Senior Manager, Fiona Brunskill and Project Manager, Zoe Smart. You are all welcome to our Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to call on National Officer, Mick Rix, to introduce this item. Mick, please address Congress.

BRO. M. RIX (National Officer, Commercial Services): President, Congress, thank you for allowing me to have the privilege and the honour of moving the next item. For a number of years going back, starting with Harry Donaldson, Jude Brimbele, Gary Smith, we have been working on a national project of organised recruitment within Asda and developing a better relationship, giving working people a voice within that industry. I have always believed in a bit of audience participation. How many GMB stewards are in the hall at the moment who work for Asda? Can you put your hands up. How many officers who deal with Asda are also in the hall? Quite a number. 142,000 people are hourly-paid colleagues, and today we have the privilege of signing a new agreement with Asda, a refreshed agreement, an updated agreement, from the 2004 agreement that we signed, which gives us better organising rights, better access rights, improved information and consultation rights as well as forums at national level, regional level and local level so that we can actually give people a better voice.

At the top of the agenda, according to our members, and quite rightly so, is collective bargaining. We have not exactly secured that at this moment in time, but it will be high on the agenda as we move forward over the next few years as an issue to welcome. I would like to thank a number of people who have helped us to get to this position. The Senior Officer Team helped me to negotiate the new agreement. I would like to thank them for their time and assistance. I would like to thank our national stewards, many of whom are here today for their encouragement, support and ideas; to our stewards for their ideas as well, who fed into the network. Many of them we have managed to achieve, and Asda's senior management listened to those views.

This agreement affects 142,000 people. As we know, manufacturing has declined and public services have declined. This is how important it is to working people as these newer industries take hold. It is right to mention Haley Tatum, the Senior Vice President for People and Stores in Asda, who is present with us, and the fact that it is 50 years of Asda this year. I think that out of those 50 years, GMB has had an involvement for around 49 of them. So it has been a long-term relationship and it is a developing relationship, and one that I am incredibly privileged and proud to also be involved in, working with our stewards and developing the network.

There is one thing I would like to say when people talk about relationships. We don't talk too much, but in the last 18 months tens of thousands of people working in Asda have joined our union. Over 250 people have become GMB stewards. That is an organising achievement that no other union in the country today has adopted. Over 250 stewards and tens of thousands of members have joined our union. That just shows how successful we can be and I am proud to be very involved in that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. You were quick finishing there. I did not expect that so quickly.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Haley Tatum to the GMB Congress. Haley is the Senior Vice President for People and Stores in Asda. She has worked in retail all her working life, moving from the checkouts to the Boardroom. She has been with Asda for the last four years developing and supporting their 170,000 colleagues. Hayley is now responsible for leading the HR strategy in the 592 Asda stores. She is a working mum with many other commitments. Hayley, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule. Please address Congress. *(Applause)*

HALEY TATUM (Senior Vice President for People and Stores in Asda) to ADDRESS CONGRESS

HAYLEY TATUM: Thank you, Mick, and thank you, Mary. It is an absolute pleasure to be here today, and I am, indeed, honoured to be here sharing a stage with Mary, who is one of the UK's most powerful

and influential women. *(Cheers and applause)* I, too, have the challenges of juggling a family life alongside my career. Like many of you here I am passionate about trying to help families wherever I can. In Asda, although it is on a much smaller stage than the one that you are operating on, Mary, I am able to influence as much as I can to help other parents.

Good afternoon, Congress. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause and cheers)* I just hope that I can do such a good job as you guys have done, particularly Eddie. It was astonishing. It sounds like you all had a good night last night. I was sorry I was not there to enjoy that one with you. First of all, thank you very much for inviting me along today. I was especially pleased to receive the invitation from Paul, who is well-known throughout the union Movement and well respected by Government and opinion-formers in general.

Paul has done wonders for turning the GMB into the union it is today, and he is, rightly, valued for his opposition to injustice in the workplace. He has earned his respect by listening to and understanding the day-to-day needs of the membership.

As an executive-board member in Asda and through my many years in retail, I, too, have developed a philosophy similar to Paul's; to try and ask as many of the right questions as I can, so that I, too, can listen to the needs of our colleagues. I have learnt that by being curious is a far more effective way of inspiring, developing and leading our colleagues to a brighter future.

Something I do not often talk about at Asda is that I spent my first 20 years working in Tesco. I know. I have been drinking the green cool aid for a few years now, so I am fully converted to Asda, but my early career has imprinted upon me the importance of a good relationship with trade unions in the workplace. Trade unions in the modern working environment are not always positively embraced by human resources departments, but my one great pleasure of my time working in Asda has been working alongside Paul Kenny, Mick Rix and Gary Smith, to renew Asda's relationship with the GMB. After much negotiation in 2012, I know our distribution division was thrilled to sign an agreement for our Logistics Services Department. Retail is a people business, and Asda is dedicated to changing the perception of the retail industry, so that we believe it offers opportunities for development and growth but every bit as fulfilling as those associated with working in other sectors. Having a body actively working on behalf of colleagues is a positive attribute, and ensuring the happiness of co-workers is fundamental to the success of our business.

Today, I am delighted to be able to share with you the fantastic news that we have refreshed our National Partnership Agreement within retail. We understand the importance of breaking down barriers and working together to provide sustainable employment opportunities for our colleagues. Refreshing our partnership in retail will enable Asda and the GMB to continue to work well together under a shared framework of principles that promote the wellbeing of our colleagues. Asda recognises and understands the importance of the role of a national union partnership. As a business, we are proud to be part of a partnership with the GMB in retail that highlights our agreed values, that strengthens our partnership principles and embraces Asda's mission to become Britain's most trusted retailer.

We established a successful retail partnership back in 2004, and the partnership which we have enjoyed throughout the last 11 years has brought significant benefits to both our colleagues and to our business. Thanks to this strong and honest partnership, Asda has achieved industry-leading standards of health and safety, and has benefited from the support provided by GMB to colleagues raising grievances and facing disciplinaries. We have also greatly appreciated GMB ideas and insight on how to encourage diversity, training and development within our business, not to mention the significant role that you play in achieving an effective consultation to minimise the impact on any colleague potentially facing

redundancy. It is an appreciation of this successful collaboration that encouraged Asda to refresh our partnership with the GMB for the future.

It is a fact that the retail world is changing, and that is not new news to any of us here. We have all heard of or been involved in many processes of consultation and change. It is a reality. It is our new normal. We have been living in this environment of constant change for several years now. The speed of this change has, however, taken the whole market by surprise. We need to ensure that our business is fit for purpose and that we will remain so long, long into the future, because the steps that we are taking now have to put us ahead of the game. Our refreshed partnership will enable both the GMB and ourselves to continue our long collaboration, and together we will pursue the best route through this challenging climate.

This renewed partnership agreement seeks to build upon joint approaches to problem solving in a number of areas. As previously mentioned, there have been challenges over the years, including the current economic climate, but these difficulties have only enriched our relationship and allowed us to work together even more effectively. I am sure we will all recognise that there may be times when differences of interest occur, or even dissimilar priorities postpone our plans, but we will always have the shared commitment of maintaining a safe and happy environment for our colleagues.

As some of you may be aware, and as Mick has just mentioned, Asda is celebrating its 50th birthday this year. That is 50 years of the Asda culture. I, personally, believe that our culture is best reflected not in big, grand gestures but in tiny noticeable things — TNT moments — whether it is a colleague going the extra mile for a customer by helping them to their car with their shopping, or a manager taking the time to congratulate colleagues on a job well done. It is those TNT moments that go together, and all add together, to make Asda a really great place to work. Knowing that the GMB understands that and that colleague commitment, contributions and teamwork is key to the success of the company is key to a successful enterprise that can deliver the levels of job security and growth in employment that we all desire.

So through clear and collaborative communication, we can maintain this already established working relationship. Refreshing our agreement today will only reinforce our partnership, consequently encouraging the development of our colleagues, which is fundamental to achieving our mission to become Britain's most trusted retailer.

We look forward to working in partnership with the GMB when resolving the challenges thrown up by this volatile and changing environment. I am not saying that our relationship has always run smoothly, but I know that the last few years demonstrates that, by working together, there are very few challenges that we cannot overcome together. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Hayley, I thank you and the other members of Asda who have joined us today. You have been very welcome. Asda's directors have often stood on *that* platform, but this new agreement gives us hope that it will go through, because all our members have ever wanted in any workplace is respect, dignity and a safe environment. *(Applause)* Hopefully, that will come with it now. It is not a one-way street but a two-way street. We understand that. Please accept for bedtime reading — please don't sell it in Asda's on the pound stall — *GMB@Work* and a bottle of GMB whisky. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

Congress, thank you for your patience. I wish the senior staff of Asda well. I have no announcements. That concludes Congress business for this morning. Details of fringe events are on the screen, as shown now. Please be back promptly at 2 pm.

The bucket collection reminder. Please give generously to the bucket collection in aid of Motor Neurone disease as you leave the hall today. Thank you.

Congress adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I call you to order, please. Congress, the President of Ireland will be addressing Congress later this afternoon and we will have to suspend Congress during this time. We have been asked to inform you that no photos should be taken while the President is in the Congress Hall. Please listen to further announcements from the chair and before we move on to the business of the afternoon can we carry on from where we left off this morning. Is there anyone who would like to come in to the debate to respond to Motions 360, 367, and 370? If so, could they come to the front, please?

BRO. S. FRANKLIN (London): Good afternoon, Congress, Madam President. I am speaking to Motion 367, referring to the second runway at Gatwick. There are two airports in the running for possible expansion. I am a member of Hounslow Branch, H46, and Heathrow Airport and people who work at Heathrow Airport form part of our membership.

Gatwick and Heathrow are the two biggest airports in the UK. I live three-quarters of a mile from the bottom of the eastern runway and you can wave to the pilots as the planes come down. It is a cosy arrangement. Heathrow, for us, is at the core of the local economy in our part of West London. It is estimated just in my borough and in the immediate area that 250,000 jobs, that is a quarter of a million jobs, rely on the airport and the airport economy. These are directly linked to the economy that Heathrow has generated. There are some very well connected and very vocal voices, like HACAN raised against the expansion of Heathrow but where I live in Hounslow a predominantly working class, immigrant, low wage population, for them Heathrow is the major source of work that affords people to raise their families with security. We are very, very lucky in that Heathrow has given us the fortunate situation of close on full employment in our borough and in the local economy. For us Heathrow is the hub airport and out of which cargo travels to Gatwick, Shannon, Edinburgh, and Belfast.

So, what I really wanted to say is that I welcome the motion to look at expanding Gatwick as well, to bring the benefits that Heathrow Airport has brought to our local economy and has also ensured the future of local people. Congress, I support. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Next?

SIS. H. KELLAM (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Speaking in support of Motion 370, Parking on Pavements. I would like to add my support to this motion as I witness on a daily basis cars parking dangerously and illegally in my area. I live next door to a primary school and the way many parents park blocking pavements, driveways, and street corners, is severely dangerous to pedestrians. Therefore, Congress, I appeal to you all to support this motion not just for the sake of all disabled and visually impaired but also for the safety of our younger generations. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Next, please.

BRO. P. STEER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Chair, Congress, I am in support of what has been said about the Parking on Pavements, Motion 370. I would like to ask if they could not stop there but it has been brought up about narrow streets, people parking there. Why can't the Government and local authorities make them no motor vehicles to make it safer for people with pushchairs, prams, mobility scooters, even guide dogs? I urge you to support it. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): My colleague Helen earlier on was talking about cars parking on pavements, vans, and it is not just the visually impaired, people with kids. To me it is just out of laziness. What my colleague did not mention at the start was if they are half-parked on the pavement, some cars set up with two wheels on the pavement. This dog is trained to take me through but she must have enough room, she must make sure there is enough space for both of us to get through, not just her. So, if a car is half-parked on the pavement, she would not move. So, she either has to take me off the road – it is even worse if a car is half-parked because then half of it is halfway onto the road. So, it is taking you dangerously on the road again. As I say, to me it is just totally inconsiderate and half-laziness and I want you, please, to support this. The guide dogs and the RNIB are running campaigns on this and other things like shared roads but this thing with the vans and cars, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pat. Next?

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Vice President, Congress, speaking in support of Motion 370, Parking on Pavements. I am asking Congress to reject the CEC qualification that parking on pavements on narrow roads is somehow acceptable. It is completely unacceptable. (*Applause*) Narrow roads are probably going to be the most dangerous for people who are vulnerable because the road is narrow and the pavement is blocked how are you going to go round it? It is putting people at risk. We take health and safety seriously. If you did a risk assessment, it would be unacceptable. Please reject the CEC qualification. (*Applause*)

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Speaking in support of Motion 370, Parking on Pavements. This is a very personal motion for me because in 2013 my Dad was involved in a road traffic accident in France which led me to be his main carer. His partner was also involved in the accident but she lives in Bournemouth. As we live in Shropshire we do have the difficulty on our estate of narrow roads so when pushing my Dad in his wheelchair it was the issue of trying not to kill him having not used a wheelchair before. However, I would call for everyone at Congress to support this motion. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hannah. I now call on Roy Dunnnett of the CEC to speak on Motions 360 and 370.

BRO. R. DUNNETT (CEC, Commercial Services): Colleagues, comrades, I am replying on behalf of the CEC to Motions 360, 367 and 370. I will deal with 370 in a minute because that is the last and the most emotive one we have been discussing today. We are asking for Motion 360 to be referred and to support Motion 367 and 370 with a qualification.

First, Motion 360, Motor Insurance Unfair Practice. The motion is calling for the GMB to commit political influence through our supported MPs to challenge certain penalties levied on drivers by insurance companies. The motion calls for concern that insurers are penalising drivers in accidents which are beyond their control, such as windscreen damage. However, it also states that insurers penalise drivers with expired points. Before we can mount a challenge on what is standard industry practice in the insurance industry the CEC ask for this motion to be referred. This is to allow evidence to be provided by

the branch on how these penalties are applied unfairly so we can illustrate when we put the argument forward.

On Motion 367, Second Runway at Gatwick, we all know that full engagement with trade unions is the best practice and the motion therefore rightly condemns the action of Gatwick's owners. However, the CEC are clear that the employers' actions are not criminal as the motion states. The case made for this motion for a second runway to be built is a compelling one as this would expand the capacity in the South East Region of Britain. We, therefore, believe this is not compatible with GMB support of the expansion of Heathrow. Therefore, support with that qualification.

Motion 370, which I think is the most emotive, GMB already supports consideration of parking initiatives and the thrust of this motion fits well into our existing policies as identified in Motion 293 passed at our Congress in 2013, which was a campaign to get cyclists off pavements, another very emotive issue. However, in some zoned areas where parking on pavements is permitted to allow safe passage of road vehicles, usually narrow one-way streets, we would not wish to remove such permissions as we would potentially create a greater risk to road users. The CEC, therefore, asks Congress to support this motion with that qualification.

I will just say this. At the end of the day, we just hope commonsense prevails. It will not be us, it will be councils and road traffic engineers who decide whether to allow parking on the pavement. At the end of the day, it is slightly beyond our control. We just hope that councils do the right thing. We can only do so much and campaign to make sure that they do.

To repeat what I said earlier, we therefore refer Motion 360, support Motion 367 and 370 with those qualifications. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Roy. Does the London Region accept the reference on Motion 360? Yes? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Do you accept the qualification on Motion 370? (*Not agreed*) You do not. Okay. Fine. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 367? Yes? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Right, we will now go to the vote. Motion 360, they have accepted the reference back and the CEC is supporting this. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? Thank you.

Motion 360 was Referred.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 367 is being supported. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 367 was Carried.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 368 has been supported. All those show, please? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 368 was Carried.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 370, the CEC has asked for a qualification on that motion. The region has refused that qualification so the CEC is asking you to reject that motion. Sorry? Right to reply? Of course you have a right to reply.

BRO. S. FRANKLIN (London): Colleagues, the point has been made. Narrow streets, if they are dangerous for cars, imagine how bloody dangerous they must be for pedestrians. The point has been made. *(Applause)* That is my point.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now come back to vote on Motion 370. The CEC indicated, if the qualification is not accepted, they are asking you to vote against this motion. All those in favour of the motion please show. Anybody against? That motion is carried. *(Cheers/Applause)* It is carried without the qualification. *(Applause)*

Motion 370 was Carried.

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now move into today's business, which is item 1, Union Organisation. Could I ask the mover and seconder of Composite 1 to come to the front, please, and also the movers of Motion 32, Organising Agency Workers? Composite 1 Wales & South West, thank you.

COMPOSITE 1

GMB YOUNG WORKERS ORGANISING STRATEGY

(Covering Motions 24 and 25)

24. GMB Young Workers Organising Strategy (GMB Wales & South West Region)

25. Young People (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

GMB YOUNG WORKERS ORGANISING STRATEGY

This Congress calls upon the Central Executive Council to support the implementation of a GMB Young Workers Organising Strategy, to be developed alongside the National Organising Team.

The main remit for the new strategy would be to look at recruiting, organising and retaining young workers, specifically in casualised work places, where there is a high density of young people in industries such as retail, catering and hospitality services.

In light of young people's involvement in the recent Scottish Referendum, this motion agrees that GMB will call upon the CEC to commence a review of

- ways on how to attract young 16/17 year olds to GMB and the trade union movement in general.
- how GMB can more effectively recruit, deploy and train its young activists; to establish new methods and procedures to support young members in unorganised workplaces and promote the union to young workers.

Wales & South West Region

Birmingham & West Midlands Region

to Move

to Second

(Carried)

BRO. B. MILES (GMB Wales & South West): Moving Motion 24 on the GMB Young Workers Organising Strategy. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Chair, Congress, with over 3 million 16-24 year olds now part of the UK labour market, the development of our young workers is key to retaining talent, building tangible relationships key to business and union development. Recruitment is only half the equation. Once in the workplace, more attention is needed to give clear definable direction of their rights as a young person in their role.

Investment is pivotal enabling the young members to broaden their access to their employment rights as well as their required investment, developing their needs and the business to drive organisational performance. I use a quote at a recent CIP, the annual congress, and they noted that young people are often maligned for not having the right skills needed in the workplace and the role of the employer in building these bridges is often disputed.

GMB should not allow these bridges to be broken down and abused. We should nurture the young working to the beliefs of honest work, fair pay, and a safe working environment. That is their constitutional right. It is clear and apparent that trade unions find it difficult to organise and work in sectors where high employment levels are that of young employees. These youngsters are having to endure poor working employment contracts, exhortation and zero-hours contracts, and a severe lack of training all because the business needs to save costs and we do not want to accrue any holidays. In addition to this, young workers often see their engagement to be temporary and we as a union find it very, very hard and challenging to represent these young workers, or indeed have the opportunity to.

We believe that the GMB can improve this situation and help develop the enhancement of young workers. We need to increase membership and we need to have a clear definable strategy in recruiting and organising young people in the workplace. The GMB needs young workers if we are going to continue to stand up for the working people of the future. Young workers make up over a third of the working population and they have the highest turnover. However, during their term they are nearly all exploited to the degeneration of slave labour, take it or leave it, all exposed to the horrible ways of government expectations.

The time has come, guys, and the time is now, that we as Congress address this situation and organise a strategy that can educate and organise a GMB implementation so we can support and develop these guys, the future of our industry. Our business case is twofold. First, the constitutional rights of the young worker should not and will not be overlooked during recruitment, retention, and indeed performance. It is their right and it is the union's priority.

Finally, we as a union should be able to adopt a well structured and well balanced alliance to educate and influence what is in fact the future of Britain. We should be able to work alongside the National Organising Department to ensure there is a national direction to achieve the goal that is indeed in the interests of the union's future. Congress, I move. please support this motion and the future of the union and, indeed, the future of the GMB. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Berni. Birmingham to second.

BRO. J. DAVIES (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) Young people are critical to the future of trade unionism, to its strength and its effectiveness. Youth does not reject trade unionism but at times struggles with finding a place in its structures and activities, even though it identifies strongly with its principles and values of equality and solidarity. That is why it is so important to listen to their voice and respond better to the policies and activities as well as expectations. That is a direct quote from the International Trade Union Confederation and sums up the spirit of the motion.

It is a must to tailor our organisation to encourage young people to fulfil their potential both in the trade union and within society. The move forwarded by the CEC to have regular young members as observers is well received but to utilise the amazing potential we need to move as an organisation. The website needs constantly updating in ways of encouraging young members. We need to reach out with education

in schools and especially in adult education. We need to reach out in workplace apprenticeships to fulfil our members' needs and make interested parties active.

Trade unionism and politics is now a very lucrative career prospect but we need to make this route available and signpost accordingly. Where there is a huge void in our organisation it is the recruitment and retention of casual labour in tourism, catering, and agriculture. Traditionally, these roles have been marginalised, intended to be taken by young people. Membership in these roles is always low and should be addressed as soon as. So, let's not pay lip service to the youth of our future, let's make them our present. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. The mover of Motion 32, please.

ORGANISING AGENCY WORKERS MOTION 32

32. ORGANISING AGENCY WORKERS

This Congress notes the increasing use of Temporary Worker Agencies by employers.

This Congress believes that employers use agency workers not only to meet legitimate business needs dealing with temporary fluctuations in work volumes, but also as a systematic strategy to push down wages and to inhibit workers from exerting their employment rights.

This Congress believes that all working people are entitled to equality of dignity and employment rights.

This Congress resolves to resist attempts by employers to misuse employment agencies.

This Congress resolves that, wherever practical, GMB will recruit all workers, whether directly employed by a company, or whether they are on assignment to that company through a Temporary Worker Agency.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Comrades, the great strength of our union is that every brother and sister, every member of the GMB, is entitled to equality and respect. Whether you are an engineer in the nuclear power industry, or you are a cleaner in a hospital, whether you are a migrant worker just arrived in this country or whether your family has been here for generations, whatever your sexual orientation or gender, then the GMB treats you equally; everybody is entitled to equality of dignity and equality of respect. Employers do not sign up to that. They treat us like commodities and pieces of meat.

What we see is the abuse of agency workers. Clearly, there is a role for agencies to handle genuine fluctuations of demand in a business but what we see is agencies being used to undercut terms and conditions and people working for years with a particular employer as a method of divide and rule.

When I first started work back in 1979 I was a porter in the National Health Service and I had pride that I worked in the same organisation as the consultants and the nurses, and the senior managers, we all worked for the NHS. With my involvement in the Carillion dispute I have spoken to people in hospitals where there are people who work in ancillary and are employed by the NHS but then seconded to Carillion working on an agenda for changed terms and conditions, but there are others doing exactly the same work, working for Carillion, paid the minimum wage, and there are other people doing exactly the

same work so they do not even have that security of working for Carillion, and they are coming in working for agencies not sure whether they have work on one day or another. This is a scandal.

What we see with Marks & Spencer, a so-called ethical company with their distribution centre, not running the company themselves, the distribution centre, but outsourcing it to another company, DHL, who then employ agency workers through 24/7, who give people contracts through another company called Tempay, and all of this is done to exploit people. I am old-fashioned enough to think that if a company is proud enough to put their name above the door, they should be proud enough to employ the workers who make profits for them. *(Applause)*

Comrades, there is a terrible trap for the unions here where we concentrate on organising only those people on the permanent contracts and it seems ridiculous to describe as privileged someone who might be on £8 an hour but, nevertheless, if you are on £8 an hour and you have a permanent job, that is better than being on the minimum wage and being in insecure employment. The challenge for us is that we cannot as a movement allow ourselves to be painted into a corner by the employer only organising those of the permanent workforce. It is a challenge for us to organise people in precarious employment on agencies but it can be done. We have organised the people in the Marks & Spencer distribution centre who work for an umbrella company. We won a recognition deal with them with an overwhelming Yes result in a ballot for the CAC because the employers opposed voluntary recognition. It can be done. Difficult challenging work for unions but what would Will Thorne have done? What would James Connolly have done? They went and organised in difficult conditions. They went and organised people with precarious employment. Let's remember that areas of the Trades Union Movement which are regarded as absolutely solid were originally regarded as challenging and new, like the docks, like the car industry and the aircraft industry, who regarded back in the 1930s as difficult to organise and challenging. Now we have very high union density.

Comrades, it is the challenge for the 21st century that the unions have to stand up to, we have to organise those in precarious employment, take the fight to the employers. We regard every member of the union, every worker, as equal and we will fight those employers who do not share that view. That is a very important principle for us. I move the motion. *(Applause)*

SIS. M. RODRIGUES (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Employers have been known to use agency workers for their own benefits. These employers do not necessarily take into consideration the welfare of these workers thus depriving them of their basic rights at work. The GMB will work to empower temporary agency workers to exercise their rights within their workplace so that they are able to gain equality and exercise it at work. The GMB will offer their services to all members irrespective of whether they are on permanent contracts or agency workers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Congress, the CEC is supporting both these motions so I will go to the vote. All those in favour of Composite 1 please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 1 was Carried.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 32 please show. That is carried as well. Thank you very much indeed.

Motion 32 was Carried.

SOCIAL POLICY: YOUNG PEOPLE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 2, which is Social Policy, and could I ask the speakers of Motions 322, 325, and 326 to come to the front, please, and the seconders. Congress, as I said earlier, we are being pushed this afternoon with the President coming in. I may have to suspend halfway through but do not worry, we will pick up where we left off when the President has gone. Can I have the mover of Motion 322 to the rostrum first, please?

IT'S TIME TO GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE THE RESPECT THEY DESERVE MOTION 322

322. IT'S TIME TO GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE THE RESPECT THEY DESERVE

This Congress notes the high levels of unemployment that make the labour market a harsh place for young people. This follows the depressingly familiar pattern of economic downturns, where the young are always disproportionately affected.

Over one million unemployed young people are being let down. The government continues to raise the state pension age and is demanding that young people work longer whilst services are being cut. To add to their woes, the Tories, in their 2015 manifesto, want to strip the right to Housing Benefit away from the under twenty fives. Even before austerity, the labour market for young people not following the academic route has become harder. Long term structural change has made young people even more dependent on lower wages and unskilled jobs than in the past.

The youth labour market remains highly segmented. The opportunities available and choices being made by young men and women on apprenticeships are still dominated by traditional occupational positions; young women predominantly taking on roles with caring responsibilities. The pay is ridiculously low.

Young workers are a vital part of the workforce but are often undervalued, underpaid, discriminated against and even bullied at work. All workers, irrespective of their age, should be treated in a fair and consistent manner by their employer.

Young workers suffer the most from zero hour contracts, making it almost impossible to begin a family life or obtain a mortgage or tenancy agreement.

The GMB and other unions work hard to protect the rights of young workers and improve their terms and conditions but it's getting harder.

Therefore congress, we call on our union to campaign for the following policies to be adopted by the new government:

1. Campaign for the adult National Minimum Wage rate to be paid at 18 and negotiate the removal of youth rates in many workplaces.
2. Urge the new administration to use procurement to create opportunities for young people. The public sector has an important role to play in encouraging employers who win major public procurement contracts, to provide as many hiring and training opportunities for young people as possible, either directly or through their supply chains. Public sector employment is in decline overall but high rates of turnover in some areas mean that hiring opportunities still exist.
3. Tailor support for different groups - such as young people with disabilities, caring responsibilities and those from ethnic minorities. Campaign to remove prejudice, whether financial, gender based or social, to help improve the choice of occupation and ability to take up work.
4. Increase the pittance that is often paid to apprentices.

(Carried)

**BASF CHEMICALS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region**

SIS. L. CROUGHAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, despite whatever fiddled figures this new right-wing government like to peddle in the Tory press, high levels of unemployment make the job market a harsh place for young people. Young people are a vital part of our workforce and are often undervalued, underpaid, discriminated against, and bullied at work. All workers, irrespective of their age should be treated in a fair and consistent manner by their employer and what jobs are available are often zero-hours contracts, or low paid, almost slave labour, apprenticeships. This new government have already stated that they intend to hit young people's benefits, limiting the amount of time young people can claim benefits to six months unless they accept a low paid job or community work. They will also stop young people from claiming housing benefit.

The GMB work hard to try and protect the rights of young workers and to improve their terms and conditions but it is only going to get harder. Therefore, Congress, we call on our union to campaign for the following policies to be adopted by the new government:

1. Campaign for the adult minimum wage to be paid at 18 and remove youth rates that are used at some workplaces.
2. Urge the Government to use procurement to create opportunities for young people. The public sector has an important part to play in encouraging companies that with major public procurement contracts to provide as many hiring and training opportunities as possible for young people, either directly or through their supply chains.
3. Tailor support for as many different groups, such as young people with disabilities, caring responsibilities, and those from ethnic minorities, by removing prejudice, whether financial, gender-based, or social, to help improve the choices and ability of young people to take up work.
4. Increase the pittance that is paid to apprentices. Two million new apprentices with no prospect of a job at the end of it is 2 million low paid workers on a ticket to nowhere.

Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lisa. Secunder?

SIS. N. IQBAL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I joined the GMB union because I saw it as a progressive union where everyone's views count, young or old. Many young people are facing more problems, whether that would be in the workplace or the wider community. Youth unemployment is rising, zero-hours contracts and temporary work are becoming the norm. This has a knock-on effect when young people try to achieve and succeed in life.

Congress, why is it deemed as acceptable by some that 18-20 year olds receive minimum wage of £5.13, therefore they struggle (a) to get on the housing ladder, (b) to afford a deposit for rental properties, and (c) even to buy proper food. Recently a research campaign did a survey completed by 151 young people aged 16-24 years old and the result revealed that one in four felt unfairly treated in their workplace, 52% said they did not feel they were aware of their employment rights, 88% said more needs to be done to spread awareness of their employment rights.

What can we do? Firstly, we have to become more accessible to young unemployed workers. We have to raise their awareness of their rights and ensure that they are not exploited when they become employed.

In the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region our project workers are now going into some schools to talk to sixth form students about their rights at work and the benefits of being a trade union member. We also provide training for young unemployed workers through our job clubs to give them skills and confidence to feel part of the society. We have to campaign on the national minimum wage for all 18-year olds; in fact, we need a living wage for all workers. They need to be treated fairly in order to succeed. The

workers of tomorrow are our children today. Please support the motion. I second. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The mover of 325, please.

EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY MOTION 325

325. EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY

This Congress notes and pledges its full support in adopting GMB Scotland's Employment Policy Model; "The Employment Journey: A Fresh Perspective to Employment".

At the centre of the model are the four steps of seeking, securing, staying and succeeding in employment. The landscape and the environment in this model contribute to achieving this by taking a person centred approach. It designs processes, policies and structures around the needs and challenges faced by the individual. It also promotes a lifelong, joined up approach to tackle inequalities, missing gaps and challenges in terms of life chances, education, employment and pensions.

Congress notes that while this model was created in Scotland, it is a model which can be adopted across the UK and elsewhere, ensuring that each of us is able to succeed in life irrespective of who we are or where we learn, work and live.

In adopting the employment journey model as GMB Policy, Congress therefore calls upon the CEC to:

- 1) Encourage regions to promote the model plus the 22 recommendations set in the document in their areas.
- 2) Work with the TUC and other unions to gather support for the model
- 3) Lobby Central and Local Government in every part of the United Kingdom to adopt the model as a way of future policy making to tackle inequalities, missing gaps and challenges in terms of life chances, education, employment and pensions.
- 4) Report back to Congress 2016 on progress.

ASDA BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

BRO. U. ALI (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 325. Mark is finding it hard to find a job. He left school at 16 with no qualifications because he felt an academic route which his school life forced him to endure was not for him. Suzie worked in a charity but was bullied and struggled to cope so she was forced to resign. Joel has worked as a colour analyst for seven years but despite having all the right skills and experience he is still struggling to achieve promotion.

The three people I have just told you about have one thing in common, they have all been set up to fail, fail in life and fail in today's Britain, but it does not have to be that way. Tomorrow's Britain can be different. Tomorrow's Britain must be different. It has to be a Britain where everyone is set up to succeed in life no matter who they are or where they live. (Applause) From the cradle to the grave, from the education system to the workplace, we need to learn from our past failures and ensure the road ahead is one destined for success.

How can we do this? My way and the GMB's way is through *The Employment Journey: A Fresh Perspective to Employment*. This is a policy model that will assist in solving the biggest issues of our time

by applying an all life, all Britain, and joined up approach to examine what is already happening and identify what more needs to be done going forward.

The journey has four steps: seeking employment, securing employment, staying in employment, and succeeding in employment. Around these steps are the Employment Journey's technical features of the context, the landscape, and the environment in which everyone's personal journey operates; the context being the setting in which the journey can be understood, such as vision, policy, and best practice; the landscape includes the main actors, features, and conditions which exist along the journey, such as your family, friends, the education system, trade unions, pay, training and development opportunities.

A list of 22 recommendations is also proposed within the Employment Journey. These promote a number of interesting and achievable actions and can be found in the document on the Employment Journey website. So, the Employment Journey can help Mark, Suzie, and Noel, as a seconder to the motion will explain in a few moments.

The Employment Journey can help everyone in Britain just as it is in Scotland. So, let's now, Congress, grab the opportunity and ensure that in tomorrow's Britain everyone is set up to succeed in life. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Seconding Motion 325, the Employment Journey. Usman has just told you about Mark, Suzie, and Noel, and you may be wondering just how this Employment Journey can make a real difference. Well, look at the situations that are identified in the recommendations in the Employment Journey which would set them up to succeed in life.

Mark would have benefited from a life development plan which followed him throughout his life and career, having guidance teachers and parents trained to support careers advisers would have highlighted a vocation over the academic route for Mark. Should Mark's school produce an employer and community engagement plan and a specialist in generous transferrable skills plan for him, then Mark would have been set up to succeed in life.

In Suzie's situation the development of a national framework of standards expected by employers and employees would have created a culture of zero tolerance of bullying and set steps to deal with the situation she faced. Work would also have provided for Suzie to utilise and develop in coping strategies as she attempts to survive in the workplace. Suzie would have had a better experience through education and support in terms of managing workplace politics and would have been set up to succeed in life.

For Noel, who is clearly succeeding in the employment part of his employment journey, a national transferrable skills qualification would formally accredit his transferrable skills, shadowing senior colleagues and making use of a mentoring system would also allow him to gain firsthand knowledge, skills, and experience of senior posts within his organisation. Through the employment journey in the world he would receive career progression opportunities and be set up in life.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can you wind up, please?

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Why should we not use ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, wind up now, Anne, please.

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Okay. Sorry. I support. Please move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*) We will take the vote later. Can you all now please be upstanding for the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins? (*Applause*) Would everyone remain standing for the playing of the presidential salute?

(*Presidential Salute played to Congress*)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, it gives me great honour to welcome you to the GMB Congress, which has not been here since 1891. You will never know how much this means to this union, and the General Secretary and myself in particular. Thank you. I would like you to address Congress.

THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND: (*Irish greeting*) Dear fellow trade unionists, I am delighted to be here with you today to speak at your Congress. Indeed, may I begin by thanking your Senior National Officer, Dave Kearney, for inviting me to address what is the 98th GMB Congress, and also as I know your National President, Mary Turner, and your Secretary General, Paul Kenny, and all of the GMB Executive, I want to thank them for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

Indeed, I have had a very long day but I have to say I would not want to miss the opportunity of speaking to the representatives of so many workers, and particularly workers in the public service, workers in the public world. I hope as I came in I did not interrupt the speech of one of the delegates speaking on the important topic of young people and social policy.

To the many hundreds of delegates who have been elected to represent over 600,000 members of the GMB trade union from every part of Britain and Ireland and from every sector of the economy and all those delegates who may be visiting Ireland for the first time, as President of Ireland (*Irish spoken*) I so welcome each and every one of you and I know that your discussions will be very, very fruitful.

This is only the second time, as indeed your President has just said, that the Congress has been held in Dublin, the first being in the 1890s, and it was so important to all of us because, of course, it was that Congress, that first one, that brought James Connolly back to Ireland.

I want to hope may it not be so long again until you meet here in Ireland and, of course, last year you celebrated your 125th anniversary (*Irish spoken*) and I congratulate you all on reaching such a significant milestone in your organisation history.

I myself have been a trade unionist nearly all my life. I was a member of what was the ESBOA, which was my first union. Then I was the founder of the teaching section of the Workers Union of Ireland which later became SIPTU, and then my wife was making her way from Equity into SIPTU, so we are a family that is a family that is familiar with trade union history.

I was very attracted to accepting an invitation to come and speak to you with the great origins that your union has, the great collection of origins that your union has, beginning as the Gasworkers and General Union formed in 1889 by the great Will Thorne, one of the great pioneers of the labour movement and who went on to be its Secretary General.

There is a memorable phrase of his. He was once asked why he had decided to dedicate his life to the labour and trades union Movement and he wrote: "There is a world of freedom, beauty, and equality to gain where everyone will have an opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all, making the world a place more to our heart's desire and the better to dwell in."

These are powerful words and they are powerful words that have a great resonance at the present time, to create a world that does not now exist but which is capable of releasing that great capacity in human achievement. I have just come from a visit to a women's prison and before that to a school where children once were fed in the city centre in Garner Street.

But I do think of your own origins as the Gasworkers and General Union in 1889 and Will Thorne, but like all early unions the GWGU established itself in addressing the very poor working conditions which existed at the time. Its first battle was for an 8-hour day and a 6-day week. I think we should never forget any of us that such rights as workers enjoy did not fall from the sky and let us always honour and remember - (*Applause*) - those who had the courage to make these demands on behalf of workers and often in very difficult conditions. Its efforts were successful and they resulted in the first working time agreement anywhere in the world.

Following the success of the union's campaign on working hours within six months 20,000 workers had joined the union and by 1911 Gasworkers Union membership had increased to 77,000. Then a great alliance emerges between a whole series of other unions, the GWGU joined with the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, the Municipal Employees Association, the National Federation of Women Workers, and in 1924 they formed the National Union of General and Municipal Workers and today the GMB is the second largest trade union in Britain and Ireland, and I pay tribute to you.

Your union has a long and distinguished history in Ireland either under its own name or under the name of trade unions that transferred their engagements to GMB; indeed, Adolphus Shields, the organiser of the Gasworkers Union in Dublin, as I have said, was the person who brought James Connolly back to Ireland in 1896.

I am a former President of the Labour Party in Ireland. It is in my past. I am now President but the fact is that I often think of those days. Only just two years ago speaking about the great lockout in Dublin, one could try and only try and envisage the circumstances in which workers worked.

After the great lockout of 1912 many impoverished workers in Dublin City where you now are had a choice of going back having been defeated or many of enlisting in the Great War; not a great war except as a term. It was a great catastrophe that would consume the young people of a generation in what was a war between empires.

Shields and other leaders of the Dublin gas workers saw a great alliance between urban trade unions and various organisations representing rural labourers in Ireland and many rural workers throughout Ireland adopted a programme, and a meeting of what was called the first Irish Labour Parliament was held in the ancient Concert Rooms in Brunswick Street on 14th May 1891.

GMB also had, as you know, very strong Irish connections through its membership in first and second generation immigrants to Britain. I know of course that your President hales from Thurlas and the parents of your Secretary General come from County Galway.

In Ireland in my own time between 1955 and 1960 a quarter-of-a-million Irish people emigrated to Great Britain, crossing the Irish Sea. Half my own family live in Manchester but one of the things that I think about that is very, very important is that this extended family of Irish people that we have abroad, they honour Ireland when they in fact insist and work and engage in seeking to secure workers' rights.

I understand that the motions you will discuss during this five-day conference focus on a number of key issues, including the campaign for social justice and fair pay, campaign for a living wage, and a living

wage is not a wage just to enable you to survive, it is to live and participate, jobs - (*Applause*) - and security, and a future as you were discussing as I came in, a future for young people, and something that we are campaigning for, something that is so important here in Ireland at the present time, rights at work and the issue of zero-hours contracts. These are all issues which are the subject of current debate in Ireland. Indeed, GMB Congress comes to Dublin at an important time in terms of the industrial relations landscape in Ireland.

One of the reasons I was also anxious as a head of state to speak was about the current atmosphere that exists in so many parts of our fragile planet. It is a time when inequality is increasing with horrific consequences in so many parts of the world. In some of the richest economies new forms of capital that have nothing to do whatsoever with production, but have to do with illicit and international flows of capital that is unaccountable and that is not transparent, is wreaking havoc in one way or another in different parts of the world. (*Applause*)

In my previous life working in the area of human rights, there are countries such as, for example, Chile, where we are called upon and were called upon so regularly to speak about workers' rights where the largest category of people assassinated were trade unionists, where trade union membership has been driven to below 30%, and in this atmosphere of growing in different forms of diverse inequality it was never more necessary that the voice of organised labour seeking collective rights that will go on the same way as previous generations of people had the courage to demand, some of those rights that we enjoy today, that they be stated.

This is not a matter of administering a participation of those who produce the wealth of the world in some form of economy that is unaccountable. I have spent days of my presidency speaking in Europe, and elsewhere, about the great danger that flows from imagining that there is a single hegemonic economic model that can in fact govern the entire planet and the consequences that come from that when we all know that there are issues which we have to deal with together globally and which require a different approach.

All of this is so important. It is important as well that workers everywhere in the world realise that it is as important now to have an economic literacy that states there is no one single model of the economy. What there is is the challenge to economics and to economic models to be able to provide the very thing you are discussing at your conference — security, decent work contracts, being able to participate as citizens, not to be disqualified from participation in the society because the economy has failed to provide you with a basic income. (*Applause*)

When people do organise and when people do get their message delivered it does count. Here in Ireland a new Low Pay Commission has been established this year with the purpose of making recommendations to the government on the appropriate rate of our National Minimum Wage. The Commission's first recommendation is expected in mid-July. Now, as President I am excluded to some extent — it would not be appropriate for me to address the detail of some of these important initiatives — but I do speak about the form of the economy and the issue of unemployment, the issue of poverty, the issue of exclusion, and I also challenge the sheer ignorance that is at the basis of some of the economic models; the assumption, as I have said, that every area of life has to be dealt with in terms of a market dominant solution. There are aspects of the decency of the public world on which your different unions that came together in this union were founded, it was to defend the public world, it was to defend the right of public spaces, the right of every citizen to be healthy, the right to have decent housing, to treat men and women as equals, and not to exploit children. These are not derivative of a market-led economy. These are rights that belong to citizens. (*Applause and cheers*)

At the present time the question of work is a concern which has been central to my presidency. I have addressed the subjects of decent work and very particularly what is now emerging as a new discussion on what is called the “precariat”, the position of the precarious worker, and what would constitute an ethical workplace I have addressed in a number of speeches to national and international bodies over the last three years.

I have told people, for example, in the European Union that if they want to see cohesion disappear, if they want to see a confrontation with no mediating institutions such as trade unions in between, they are playing with fire and very often what is an economic crisis can be turned into a crisis of social cohesion. The position of the worker in society is incredibly important.

I am pleased to see that all of those issues you are addressing them in your Congress. Congresses involving trade unions are awfully important. They are not the occasion of mere rhetorical statements. They actually say there are things that matter and there are things that matter not only to the delegates and to the members that they represent but are important for future generations. For if there is to be a sustainable economy, and if our planet is to be saved, and if we are to reduce poverty in the world and avoidable diseases, we need to be able to think long and beyond as our ancestors in the trades union Movement did. I am so pleased that all of the issues that are on the agenda follow such a vision.

When I launched the President of Ireland’s ethics initiative I conducted a national consultative process that I have been hosting for the past year-and-a-half. That consultation suggested something I think that very many people miss, younger people, who want a decent society not just for themselves but for all citizens; older people, they are asking for a decent society for young people. (*Applause*)

There are some great, great writers that I remember studying when I was at Manchester saying things like, for example, “Our choice is as to whether we are to be the passive consumers of failed models of connection between economy and society, or whether we want to be active agents of change bringing into existence new forms of equality, new forms of expression of the human spirit.” The Irish Congress of Trade Unions have run recently a programme of activities under the banner, Ethical Workplace. Working with their member unions, Congress set about gathering views from individual workers, workers’ unions, and representative bodies, on what were the essential qualities of a workplace that could be considered ethical.

Work is not that to which you go to waste your life, to be tolerated, to be allowed to survive. It is the expression of a human’s gift in the wider sense and that is why in Congress’s discussion the responses that came back included words like, respect, equality, trust, honesty, transparency, security, effort, creativity, and they occurred again and again in the messages of the workers outlining a vision of the good workplace, where workers are enabled to pursue their material wellbeing and personal development, in conditions of dignity, economic security, equal opportunity, and also, as I have said, where workers are enabled to participate as citizens.

Taking these goals I believe the trade unions continue to have an essential role to play in defending and advancing such a conception of the good workplace in a global context characterised by huge and increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of financial capital and, as I have said, unaccountable institutions and decision-making structures.

Look at the changes that have taken place even in my own lifetime, when one opens the newspapers and you find the response of senior decision-makers often in political positions in Europe saying, what the markets are saying, what the markets will allow, what the rating agencies are saying, as if in fact you

should place citizens in their diversity at the mercy of unaccountable rating agencies who are in fact themselves being involved in forms of misleading prose. (*Applause*)

But far beyond not only in relation to the issues of income, beyond the workplace itself, the voice of the trades union Movement is also much needed as we seek to rebuild our economy and in the aftermath of this great failure of — let us call it for what it is —speculative capital and a dominant model of economics that has wreaked so much damage and havoc to the lives of workers and their families.

Now, more than ever, all over the world the voice of trade unions is needed and I say this as well, those of us who have had the advantage of working as an academic, and so on, there is nothing lesser about the view of a trade union in relation to the economy and the view of a trade union in relation to the economy is certainly superior to that of a gambler's opinion in relation to speculative capital. (*Applause, cheers and whistling*)

May your voice be loud as the new economics is brought into being, one in which the demands of economy, ecology, and ethics, and a sustainable form of development can be in balance. This year is a crucial year as we take huge decisions in relation to sustainable development goals and in relation to the planet itself. Your voice is necessary as we renew our resolve to address the persistent inequalities in our society and we do not need inequality to sustain our society, and in this regard I pay special tribute to the leadership that the GMB has shown in the area of women's rights. Women have had to wait too long for equality. (*Applause*)

Finally, I would like to congratulate GMB who together with SIPTU and others have commissioned a beautifully illustrated new book, *James Connolly and the Re-Conquest of Ireland*. That book brings together a collection of previously unseen family papers and writings, and sheds new light upon the writing and reception of Connolly's last major work. That beautifully illustrated book looks at Connolly's contribution to the cultural and political life of Ireland against the centenary of the Dublin lockout and other major events in Irish history.

Really, our struggle was never one for bread alone but, as Larkin put it, for bread and roses and that is why also in relation to the ancient language I speak myself, that Irish language belonged to all those workers forced to go abroad. There is no area of culture which cannot be enriched by the participation of workers. That book I refer to, a beautifully presented book, will make a significant contribution to our understanding of one of Ireland's greatest republicans and socialist leaders.

It is so timely as we prepare for the centenary of a founding event of our own state, the 1916 rising, a revolutionary event as Connolly saw it, a strike against empire which had both nationalist and socialist strands and in which organised labour played a great role. But I have often in my recent speeches said as well, when you critique that nationalism and you look within it for where is the flame of egalitarianism and equality, and it is in Connolly and in the citizen army you will see the broader space, not just independent but equal, and equal in every sense. That was the message.

That is why, then, I understand, as I finish where I began, when Will Thorne said, "There is a world of freedom, beauty, and equality to gain where everyone will have an opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all, making the world a place more to our heart's desire and the better to dwell in."

We have since the end of the 1980s seen the destruction of the public world, we have seen huge pressure on the role of the state, and yet all of your unions and your workers work in the public realm, in the public world, for the public good, it is time to reclaim the public world and those principles for which your

founders fought they are as relevant today as when Will Thorne uttered them, and I know that they will be a guide to you into the future.

May I conclude by congratulating everyone involved in bringing this Congress to Dublin, a wonderful city, a city with a great workers' history, I hope you enjoy every minute of your time here. *(Irish spoken)* I wish you all the best for the remainder of your conference and I hope that we will have the opportunity of meeting again in the future, and thank you for allowing me the privilege of addressing this important Congress. Thank you very much. *(Standing ovation)*

(Standing ovation)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, President, I have to say I have been to a lot of conferences and I have seen a lot of people but that was one of the most fantastic inspiring speeches that has ever been made. *(Applause)* I say this, honestly, right deep, it is a great honour for us that you found the time to come. We are so grateful. I will say this to you, if more politicians would talk the way you do, from the heart, there would not be a lack of faith in the political system. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Doesn't it make you proud to be a member of a socialist party and I just wish our party would learn some lessons from our Labour colleagues here. *(Cheers/Applause)* Congress, this was about human beings, not about how much money people can make. It was about dignity, respect, and a living wage, not a survivor's way, as the President said. I am proud and honoured to be here with you today. It is something I will never ever forget. Thank you, Mr. President, and this Congress has shown how much they cared about you today and your sincerity in all that you do. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Presentation of gift amid applause.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, the President of Ireland is now leaving. *(Applause)* Thank you, Congress. Thank you for that warm welcome you gave the President.

We will now continue with business. We are quite some time behind. At this moment in time, I shall not be taking any extra speakers until we can catch up with a little time. Sorry about that. I know you have spent a lot of time doing these but we must get back into business. I will take now the mover of Motion 326, please.

OBSTACLES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN OBTAINING AN INTERVIEW MOTION 326

326. OBSTACLES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN OBTAINING AN INTERVIEW

This Congress is deeply concerned at a new and growing problem for young people seeking work. More and more employers are requiring young applicants to undergo internet application forms and assessments to determine whether an interview will be offered.

This is off-putting for many young people especially those with little or no internet experience and/or where internet experience or use would not be relevant to the job they are applying for.

Congress therefore, calls on all officers, both lay and full time, including those with responsibilities in local and national government to urge employers not to use this process as part of the selection criteria.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Vice President, Congress, how do you follow that! What an amazing speech. Does he want to come and run the UK?

Congress, there is no doubt that the worldwide web is integral to the advancement of young and old throughout the UK. There is also no doubt that knowledge of IT should be the goal of every educational establishment in this country. But let us not forget, colleagues, that IT training is not available to all, not to the old, the illiterate, or those from disadvantaged backgrounds and, indeed, colleagues, even in schools the quality of IT training varies considerably leaving some children, especially those with no computer equipment at home, at a distinct disadvantage.

All over the country councils are cutting face-to-face services and increasing internet service despite the fact that a lot of people do not have the internet access at home. Colleagues, it is an absolute get out. Promise the earth for the haves and to hell with the have nots. It is well known that there is a youth unemployment crisis in epic proportion in this country.

This crisis is not helped by the growing trend to have the young of this country, and I mean the most vulnerable of our youth, to make online applications for jobs. In some cases, colleagues, these jobs may require an IT or internet knowledge so that an online application is valid. However, especially in retail, it is not online or IT knowledge that is required. It is the ability to follow instructions, to learn and work hard, and develop customer service skills. How any employer can determine those potential skills from a loaded online application form is beyond me.

There is one particular supermarket, Waitrose, who previously were proud of the fact that they promoted youth employment. Sadly, this is not the case now. They only accept online applications and these applications ask for knowledge of retailing that school leavers can never have. That knowledge can only be gained from training and experience. It is known that more than one Waitrose manager has filled in these application forms and been rejected. How is that possible, colleagues? Does that not prove online applications are flawed when IT is not part of the job?

Colleagues, applications for jobs, especially for young people, should be reasonable and reflect the role that the vacancy is advertising. They should not be on tried and tested methods. They should be fair and transparent. They should be opening the doors to our young people, not closing them. Congress, please give our youth a chance of life. I move. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. Secunder?

SIS. L. GAYLE (London): Old delegate, old speaker! (*Applause*) President, Congress, jobs for young people were a problem under the last government and are going to be an even bigger problem under this new one. They simply do not care about old, young, or the disadvantaged but some employers, especially in retail, are wrongly denying youngsters an opportunity by insisting on online applications for vacancies.

It is right that education should include IT skills and it is also right for youngsters to be encouraged to develop these skills and use them for personal advancement or in their jobs. Lack of computer skills and competition are preventing some youngsters from getting an interview or a job. All job applications are now done online and rejected without a face-to-face interview. The Government are saying that there is over 970,000 youngsters out of work at the moment between the age of 16 and 24, one in ten with nothing to do, and the figures are rising. Sometimes they say it is 2 million unemployed, sometimes they say 3 million. Liars. The figures could be as much as a quarter or even a third for young people.

Congress, London Region has no problem with the use of IT, nor has it a problem with IT being used appropriately in a selection process. It does, however, have a problem in that there has never been a computer programme or website that can fill a supermarket shelf so why use computers to determine who is best suited to fill a shelf? Congress, please help to open doors for young people. Please don't shut the doors. I support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Laura. I now call on Harry Donaldson to give the statement on Motion 325 on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. H. DONALDSON (Regional Secretary, GMB Scotland): Congress, the Employment Journey is a fresh perspective on youth employment and all of the associated issues and barriers that go along with youth employment in today's environment. The journey is based on the work developed by one of our GMB Scotland's young members who you heard at the rostrum today moving the motion on the Employment Journey.

The Employment Journey is a holistic approach looking at young people at various stages of entering the labour market, from the first steps of seeking employment to securing and succeeding in gaining employment, and sustaining employment. The initiative has been supported by the Scottish Trade Union Congress and has been recognised as a significant contribution on young people's employment and their life chances by the Scottish government. The Employment Journey looks at the area of employment through a different lens, in a way that challenges central and local government employers, educationalists, service providers, communities, and under-represented groups. This work led by our GMB young members should make us all proud and show us how serious our young members are on shaping the future direction of such a central policy issued for Scotland's young people.

We have just heard the real stories of three young people and how the Employment Journey would have made a difference to them and their life chances. Congress, the CEC believes this motion is worthy of our support and is asking for a national adoption of a regional model developed by GMB Scotland, the creation of one of our own GMB young members, Usman Ali, chairperson of the ACC Young Workers' Committee and first chairperson of Scottish Asian Pakistani heritage and of the Muslim faith. (*Applause*)

Congress, with the endorsement of this statement by Congress, a copy of the Employment Journey will be provided to all regions and the CEC would ask GMB Scotland to refer to their progress in the 2016 report, the General Secretary's Report. I should also add that in terms of the President's address just made that if there was any doubt whatsoever on the issue of young people and the future of the GMB, they will be the agents of change, they will be our future, and having listened to them this week at Congress I have no doubt the future of GMB is safe in their hands. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Harry. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting all the three motions, Motions 322, 325, and 326. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They have all carried.

Motion 322 was Carried.

Motion 325 was Carried.

Motion 326 was Carried.

SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now move on to item 4, which is Social Policy. Would the movers and seconders of Motion 374, 377, and 378 please come to the front? Could the mover of Motion 374 please come to the rostrum?

DWP TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES MOTION 374

374. DWP TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES

This Congress is asked to support a campaign for DWP to work in partnership with other agencies to prevent the loss of benefits to the most vulnerable of our society and those suffering in other ways. When someone has lost their job for any reason it is a very stressful time, applying for benefits only adds to the burden. If the benefits agency referred people to other support agencies then there would be less people suffering the consequences of loss of income due to not understanding the system or what they should be applying for. The worst thing is many disabled people who had work and were supported by Remploy have no longer got that support and don't know who to turn to. If there are services such as the Union Learn Centres, Social Services and supporting people services that can help with the process, there would be less people being sanctioned or losing a benefit because they had not completed a form in time.

A08 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. MERCER (North West & Irish): David is a man in his late 40s and has a learning disability. He has lived all his life with his parents, and he had a job. His father died and his mother is now in nursing care. David was made redundant from his job. He worked for Remploy. He was put in ESA on the support network. He cannot read and write so when his benefits stopped and his housing benefit stopped, he needed help. He did not know where to turn. Someone suggested he went to a food bank. After his third visit at the food bank they began to realise that there were more problems.

Mary is a lady who worked for B&M. She had an accident at work and was made unemployed. She relied upon her 19-year old son to care for her. They were not on the correct benefits and her son kept being sanctioned because he missed appointments due to having to care for his Mum.

These are a couple of many examples of people that I have worked with and that other agencies have worked with that are suffering from benefits sanctions or inability to understand benefits. Tameside Council are working with the DWP and Job Centre Plus, and other agencies, to provide support for these people who are vulnerable and to many others to prevent them from losing their homes, losing their benefits, and suffering financially.

I ask Congress to support a campaign to work with the DWP and other agencies for all local authorities to do this so that we can have a safe and a financially supported network for everyone who becomes unemployed or is already unemployed. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Secunder?

BRO. J. SMITH (North West & Irish): I second this motion because more can be done to help the vulnerable in our society where the Government has failed to address the problem. The movement in changing disability allowance, working tax credits, moving it to personal independence payments and universal credits is an absolute nightmare for our vulnerable and disabled people in our society. I am a branch secretary that has over 100 members that are disabled and these disabled people all work for Remploy. On a week to week basis I can get somebody give me a ring, meet somebody in person, and it

is all about concern and help in our society today. What does it lead to? Sometimes it is a smile but mostly it is anger and tears. Our mover, Linda, does an excellent job on a week to week basis through the GMB helping these people, but it is not enough. It is not enough. We have to move forward with this and I am asking you to support this motion because this is the way we have to go, not just the DWP, there are other sections round the corner. The GMB have good learning centres, companies that operate in disabled societies learning centres, there is no support and no funding for them, and they can help with this. I second this. Please move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joe. Can I have the mover of 377, please?

ACCESS TO WORK MOTION 377

377. ACCESS TO WORK

Congress agrees Access to Work Grant can pay for practical support if you have a disability.

- * Start working
- * Stay in work

Disability or health condition must affect ability to do the job.

- * Start new job
- * Reduce absence from work

We call upon this Congress to lobby government to improve the Access to Work Policy.

Our members have to wait far too long for support after that first call is made.

We are seeking a restructure and a new policy that enables our members to get the help they require at the very first opportunity.

ASDA BEDFORD DC BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. DENTON-CAINE (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, three years ago I started working on the night shift at Asda. There was a young man I noticed sitting on his own all the time in the dining room. He did not mingle much on the shop floor. I asked a few questions, why is he always sitting on his own. A few colleagues told me he is just quiet and keeps to himself. I befriended him and got to know him better. After several conversations, he opened up and told me that he is dyslexic and epileptic. With those words he changed my outlook on human life as he looked so normal. From looking and speaking to him you would not have known he had those disabilities.

We as humans sometimes look at disability as only a physical impairment. Very few of us think about mental or hidden disabilities unless it is close to home through families, friends, and colleagues. Has anyone of us ever stopped to ask why is that elderly man, who appears to have had a stroke, working in the car park pulling trolleys in the bitter cold or the blistering hot sun, or when you are in the car park or entering a building and you need some directions to a particular area of the building, you notice the young man or woman who seem to have taken a long time to answer. You will normally have walked away frustrated or stand there with folded arms, slightly irritated with his/her sour face. We should all stop to think that there may be a reason why this person may have taken so long. Does he or she have a speech impediment or some disability that prevents them from answering the question more quickly?

With the information I have given you can you ask yourself, why are some disabled people given the lowest paid job in the company? We can do something to help. Access to Work: Access to Work is a scheme run by the Job Centre Plus. The scheme provides advice and particular support to disabled people to enable them to work alongside their able-bodied colleagues. Whatever the employment – Sorry, I think I am passing out. (*Delegate assisted.*) (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Jasmine.

BRO. B. CONNORS (London): Another round of applause for our young mover there. *(Applause)* First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Disabled workers face many struggles. They struggle to find work. They face discrimination and prejudice. They often face sheer ignorance about their abilities. When they do find work, they often face further struggles to remain in work, with discrimination from employers, managers and, sadly, their own colleagues. At the same time as the Tory Government and Iain Duncan Smith keep telling us that disabled people must get off the benefit and into work, the hypocrites have reduced funding and the access to their services. If we believe that disabled people deserve dignity and rights in the workplace, then we must support Motion 377 and campaign and lobby government to provide proper funding and access to their services. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can the mover of Motion 378 please come to the rostrum?

EXPLOITATION – UNEMPLOYED WORKING FOR BENEFIT MOTION 378

378. EXPLOITATION – UNEMPLOYED WORKING FOR BENEFIT

This Congress is asked to campaign for anyone who attends work placements to be paid a wage instead of just getting their benefits and not have the threat of sanctions if the person feels that the job is not what they are qualified to do. Forty people who are unemployed were placed at Hitchens Manchester on a two week work trial working 12 hours shifts for FREE, one person was offered a permanent position. A few weeks later Hitchens had another group of people working for free. Pound Stretchers, PPI firms, Call Centres, care Services and many more are staffed by people claiming benefits on the pretence that there is a job at the end of it. These people are treated as slaves in the various different industries and have the threat of sanctioning if they do not complete the work placement. Lucy has a degree in Social care, was forced to work in a care home for FREE and the only experience she had was cleaning.

A08 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. MERCER (North West & Irish): Moving Motion 378. I want to thank the previous two speakers about the disabled but this particular one is not about disabled people. I ask Congress to campaign against the exploitative actions on the unemployed being forced to work for their benefits. They are threatened that if they do not complete the so-called voluntary work or training, they will be sanctioned or even taken off Job Seekers Allowance, or employment support allowance.

In Manchester 40 people were placed at a clothing store on a two-week trial, working 12-hour shifts with no pay. A few weeks later another group of people were placed there, free workers. The store was quids in. Other companies that I know are Pound Land, PPI firms, call centres, care services. My son's friend Tracey has a degree in psychology. She was sent to one particular call centre. They were supposed to be cold calling to see if somebody had a hearing defect due to work. They would take the details and that would seem to be a company that was supporting people who had a hearing impairment. Those people were never going to get a call back particularly for their hearing impairment because the company she was working for was selling the information and details to other companies. It was a scam. She went back to the Job Centre and the Job Centre said she needed to go back there the following day; it was work experience for her. When she refused to go she was told her benefits would be stopped.

There are many more examples like that of people who are going for jobs that are well below their skills or being forced to work for not just a few weeks but months for voluntary agencies. One young person

that I met, a disabled person, was raising thousands and thousands for Age Concern but not getting paid a penny themselves.

Slave labour and scam call centres that feed on those who are vulnerable are just some of the problems with this scheme. It needs to be stopped. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder? Can we just have a round of applause for the lady leaving? (*Applause*) Thank you, colleagues.

BRO. M. CLARK (North West & Irish): Vice President, Congress, welcome back to the new Victorian practice of working but now it is working for your benefits. It is called Workfare. The Tories lead us to believe that there is a job for you at the end of your placements but the case is, it is highly unlikely that you will receive a job. If you do not comply with working for virtually free, you are then sanctioned mainly by having your benefits stopped, forcing the unemployed into further poverty leading to the use of food banks or, even worse, to go to money lenders or loan sharks just to survive. They even use sanctions against the unemployed for being late for their so-called workplace placements.

B&M is a private profit-making company, they made over £100m last year and they use people on benefits. There are so many companies, such as Pound Land. I could go on. It would be interesting to know how many Tory MPs are involved in companies that use the scheme. After all, it ensures that their profits rise on what is effectively slave labour; yes, Congress, slave labour in 2015. What next, workhouses? Under this Tory Government it may be the next reality. Please support this motion. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. I now call on Kath Slater to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. K. SLATER (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 374, DWP to Work in Partnership with other Agencies. The principle that people should have access to information and support from specialist support agencies when there is change in their financial circumstances is worthy of support. However, we are concerned that many local authorities and third sector organisations have been severely restricted in their activities and in some cases closed due to funding cuts. It is highly unlikely this Tory Government will make more funds available for the type of partnership working suggested in the motion. The Government prefers to use benefit sanctions, a lack of information and access to information, to reduce welfare expenditure.

We support the principles in the motion but our qualification is that providing such advice and also possibly representation comes at a cost. So, without additional funding to support these organisations, this would not be viable. However, we will continue to campaign for the Welfare Reform Act, which includes benefit sanctioning to be repealed. Congress, please support Motion 374 with this qualification.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kath. Does the North West & Irish Region accept the qualification? (*Request for right to reply.*) Yes.

SIS. L. MERCER (North West & Irish) exercising the right to reply, she said: Working in a local authority I appreciate that they do not have the money but the type of agencies that I am asking to work with the DWP are housing associations, food banks, and other such agencies where people turn up to them to ask for support, not particularly the local authority. Like I say, Tameside are working with the Job Centre and DWP to negotiate with housing associations, churches, food banks, and other such agencies. Therefore, I am saying please carry on and support this campaign. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Linda, do you support the qualification?

SIS. L. MERCER (North West & Irish): No.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You do not. Okay.Fine.

SIS. L. MERCER (North West & Irish): Because it is not local authorities. It is other agencies.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Fine. Thank you. No. I just have to ask that question. You do not support it. That is fine. (*Applause*) Right. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting 377 and 378. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? Those two are carried.

Motion 377 was Carried.

Motion 378 was Carried.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The North West & Irish Region do not support the qualification so, therefore, the CEC is asking you to vote against that motion without the qualification. All those for that motion, without the qualification, please show. All those against? I am afraid that is carried without the qualification. (*Applause/Cheers*)

Motion 374 was Carried.

POLITICAL VIDEO

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now have a short video showing highlights of our political campaigning before and after the General Election.
(*Video shown*)

BRO. I. LAVERY spoke on video as follows: “My name is Ian Lavery, the Member of Parliament for Wansbeck in the North East Region. I am the Chairman of the Trade Union Group of Labour MPs, and I have no doubt of the task ahead of us following the disaster of 2015. What we have to look at is not crying in our beer, not crying tears, but we’ve got to organise. We’ve got a huge job as a labour and trade union Movement to stop that steamroller which is heading down our way, and it is a role of the trade union Movement, together with the party which was formed over a century ago, to ensure that we do that. It would have been a fantastic victory in 2015, but we are now in opposition. We have a torrid time ahead. We can only beat off the attacks from the Tory Government if, indeed, we work together as a labour and trade union Movement.

“The Labour Party was formed over a century ago by trade unions, by ordinary working people who had many problems in their communities and in society. Working people needed a voice in Parliament, and that is what we need today. We need to strengthen those links. The Labour Party is our party. It isn’t anybody else’s. It is not for sale. It is not to give away. We want to make sure that we’ve got as many working people in the party, fighting for the core values, for the traditional values that I have just mentioned. We must look after those people who the party was formed for in the first place. The labour and trade union Movement is much stronger when it is fighting on the front foot against the common enemy.

“I am terribly proud of the fact that the way the party is financed from trade unions. It comes from the dinner lady, the lolly-pop man and the council worker. It is the cleanest money in politics, and it is the most valuable money in politics. It’s your money supporting the party. That is so, so important to

understand within the Labour Party as well. As a result, that is why we need to get together, fight together and win together, to ensure that people, like the people I have mentioned, have got a great future. I am really proud to be a member of the GMB and I have had fantastic support right through my tenure as a Labour MP. I've had fantastic support not just from the General Secretary and the Executive, but from each and every member in my constituency who came out and supported me at the election, the ones who came out knocking on doors or listening to other people's points of view, irrespective of whether they agreed with them or not. I am also very proud of the people who came out and delivered leaflets. They were fantastic. The trade union Movement is a family, as are the members in this fantastic union, the GMB." (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, GMB and our members have worked tirelessly supporting those members who want to stand for Council or Parliament, and we are really proud of what we have achieved together. I would like to show you one of the finest moments of the General Election, and I am told this clip went viral over the internet. (*YouTube clip shown*)

BRO. RICHARD BURGON, spoke on video as follows: "I am Richard Burgon MP. Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to thank everyone involved in the process of the election, for making the election and the counts run so smoothly. I also want to thank my agents and all the team involved in my campaign. I also want to thank George Moody, the recently-retired Labour MP for East Leeds. He has been a fantastic servant in politics for the right reasons.

"The last time I was in this arena I was watching *Queen*, or a band calling itself *Queen*, playing *We are the Champions*. When I look at the results that may be unfolding across the country nationally, I ask myself "Who are the champions now?" I think the champions nationally, if the results go as they are expected to go, will be the rich and the powerful. The taxed working people in East Leeds and across the country since 2010 have been made to pay the price for a banking crisis they did not cause! The banking crisis was caused by the bankers. The clue is in the name. That is why, despite all the criticism he may get from the big-business backed media, Rupert Murdoch and other figures not really worthy of respect, Ed Miliband was right to attack the bankers. Ed Miliband was right to take on Rupert Murdoch. Ed Miliband was right to attack those who think that society's fair when the privileged 1% at the top do fine and the rest of us don't.

"I will finish on this. I want to dedicate this victory to the people of East Leeds. I want to dedicate this victory to the people in East Leeds who have paid the bedroom tax. I want to dedicate this victory to the people in East Leeds forced on to zero-hour contracts. I want to dedicate this victory in East Leeds to those who deserve a wage rise, and I want to dedicate this victory in East Leeds to Remploy workers, who were thrown on the scrapheap by a cruel and callous Government." (*Applause*)

"At the end of the day, it looks like the national result may be not one in favour of working people. Ultimately, we have to decide which side we are on. The struggle continues. I dedicate this victory to the people of East Leeds who have shown not my quality but have shown their quality. East Leeds, I salute you!" (*Applause*)

ADDRESS BY RICHARD BURGON MP

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am proud to welcome the man himself, Richard Burgon MP from Leeds East, to address Congress. Richard, where art thou? (*Applause and cheers*)

RICHARD BOURGON MP: Friends, comrades, brothers and sisters, thank you so much for inviting me here today. I am proud to have been a GMB member since 2002, and it feels good to be here in Ireland,

the land of my ancestors, with so many GMB comrades who work tirelessly to make life better for the most important people in our society: working-class people and their families. It also feels good to be here, to have heard the fantastic, eloquent, passionate and inspiring address by President Michael Higgins. It was good to hear him talking about the kind of alternative economic system, the alternative economic model, that we, as trade unionists and socialists, need to see. I think there are some people in the Labour Party across the Irish Sea who would do well to listen to the speech that he made today. *(Applause)*

Before I get on to the politics, I wanted to thank some people. Thank you to all of my fellow GMB members who campaigned to get me selected and elected in East Leeds, my home constituency, where my family have lived and worked for over a hundred years since arriving from this island looking for work. Thank you to Paul Kenny, an outstanding General Secretary, who along with our CEC and Congress, took the decision to take action to fight to reclaim the Labour Party for working people. The truth is that our union has quietly and effectively got stuck in with the bread-and-butter practical work of supporting hundreds of so-called “ordinary people” to become candidates, councillors and MPs. Our union’s National Political Team has played no small role in that, supporting people like, for example, a care worker and now a Labour council, too, Michelle Collins from Wakefield. I saw Michelle address a trade union rally in Leeds just before the general election, and that rally — some of you may have been there — was attended by over seven hundred people. Michelle told the rally that doing that speech to such a large audience in front of the TV cameras would have been unthinkable to her just a few short years ago. It was our union, the GMB, that gave Michelle the confidence to do just that, and it was our union also that support people like newly-elected Labour MP Angela Rayner, who is the very first home-care worker in history to become a Member of Parliament, and who, even more importantly, will be able to use her position as an MP to stand up for home-care workers and the other vital unsung heroes in our society. *(Applause)* These and many more of the practical outcomes of our union’s political work should not be underestimated. It is all about rolling up our sleeves and fighting to ensure that there are more people in council chambers and more people in Parliament who will stick up for the interests of people in the real world.

I would also like to thank my own region — Yorkshire and North Derbyshire *(Cheers)* It’s real easy to get a cheer from them, and that’s why I like them so much — and our regional secretary, Tim Roache. Tim has never sucked up to the great and the good in the Westminster bubble. He’s put our union’s political principles into practice. So, thank you, Tim. You’re an honorary Yorkshireman despite supporting Arsenal. You can’t win them all.

So, what about the current political situation? The Conservative Government are hell bent on finishing their projects of turning our NHS into a USA-style healthcare system, where they feel for your wallet before they feel for your pulse. The Conservative Government are hell bent on finishing the job that Thatcher started, of preventing our trade unions from being able to take action to defend jobs, services and defend and advance pay and terms and conditions. Fundamentally, the Conservative Government are hell bent on completing their plan of using the economic crisis of 2008, a crisis caused by the bankers and the banking system, as a smokescreen to reverse all the gains that working-class people have made in Britain since the end of World War Two. They are hell bent on a lot of things. So I say it is down to us to give them hell! *(Applause)*

A lot of nonsense is being talked at the moment about why Labour lost the general election. Some people are saying that it is because we were too left-wing. I never heard that on the doorstep, either in my constituency in East Leeds or in any of the marginal constituencies I campaigned in because, Congress, it wasn’t too left-wing to abolish employment tribunal fees, it wasn’t too left-wing to abolish the bedroom tax, it wasn’t too left-wing to increase the National Minimum Wage, it wasn’t too left-wing to introduce a mansion tax to put extra money into our NHS, it wasn’t too left-wing to throw exploitative zero-hour

contracts into the dustbin of history where they belong, and it wasn't too left-wing to save our NHS from being sold off to fat cats, parasites and profiteers. So I didn't hear on the doorstep that Labour's too left-wing.

However, what I did hear time and time again on the doorstep was "You're all the same." To those who think, whether in the media, business or Westminster, that the solution to the electoral problem of people thinking "We are all the same" is to be more similar to the Conservative Party, I say "You're living in cloud cuckoo land, and your approach will lead the Labour Party to long-term electoral oblivion", and the GMB delegates in this Congress know that that is true. *(Applause)* Of course, the Labour Party wasn't and isn't perfect. No party and no organisation is, apart from the GMB, but to walk away from the Labour Party — our party — because it is not perfect is a bit like trying to set up your own union from scratch because you are not happy with the way your union branch is being run at the moment. It's time to fight more than ever. It's time to fight for the kind of Labour Party that we want and need. It's time to fight against travelling back in time to the stale, out-dated Blairism of the 1990s. It's time to fight to stop this Government's agenda of waging war on our class. Industrially and politically, the GMB has achieved practical victory after practical victory throughout our history and right up to now. I know that if we all fight together further victories, industrial and political, can and will be ours. Together we can defeat this Government's plan to make working people and our public services pay the price for an economic crisis we did not cause. Together we can get this Government out. Together we can smash the free-market fundamentalism which has ruled British politics in the interests of the top 1% since 1979, and together everyone in this room can make history and leave as our collective legacy a better society for those who come afterwards, those who come after us.

I look forward to fighting and winning our battles alongside you. Thank you very much. *(A standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, for the last five years — it didn't just start last year — the GMB had a plan to bring working people into Parliament so they could speak for the people who they knew existed, the vulnerable, the sick and the needy, and to give them the right to survive in a decent country with a living wage. Richard, we are proud to be sponsoring part of your election. I am very very proud today to see you here and to hear you address our Congress. Thank you very much, indeed. You keep up the good work, as I will be watching you.

(Richard Burgon MP was presented with a Bottle of GMB Whisky and books)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before we start the next debate — I know we are running late, and it was great having heard the President of Ireland and I am still recovering — there is an ex-MP with us who lost his seat in Scotland, not because he didn't do the work or because he didn't care about you and the issues that we, the GMB, because he is GMB through and through, Tommy Greatrex, welcome to the Congress. *(Applause)* Tom, it is great to see you.

Just to let Congress know, the young member who was taken ill here, she is fine. She is in good hands. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Composite Motion 8.

POLITICAL: GENERAL

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION COMPOSITE 8

(Covering Motions 233 and 234)

233. Political Engagement (Wales & South West Region)

234. Political Organisation (North West & Irish Region)

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

This Congress notes that over the past two years the GMB has made a major effort to encourage its members to engage in the Political process and to be more aware of the benefits Political Engagement brings.

It is very easy to sit on the sidelines and to bemoan what politicians do in our name. We can all give examples of things we are unhappy with for example: -

- Cuts to Public Services
- Bedroom Tax
- Zero Hour Contracts
- Privatisation of the NHS
- Wage Freezes

However, the only way to deal with these issues is to put pressure on politicians, by joining the Labour Party, getting involved in GMB and community campaigns and to consider standing for public office. If we are unhappy with what the current batch of politicians is doing we should do something about that by standing ourselves.

This Congress seeks to encourage greater involvement of all members in local, national and elective politics by making political training and education available to all, and by taking a positive approach to organising the whole membership in political activities.

We therefore call upon the CEC to ensure that there are more opportunities for members to become involved in political campaigns, and to take up training courses/opportunities that will give our members the skills and knowledge about the role of being an elected politician.

Wales & South West Region	to Move
North West & Irish Region	to Second

(Carried)

SIS. J. SMITH (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Composite 8 on Political Engagement and Organisation. President and colleagues, in 2012 the General Secretary came to Congress outlining a CEC recommendation to introduce a 14-point political strategy that was designed to re-engage members with the political party that was set up by working people in the early 20th century. One hundred years on it is as essential as ever to get our members to realise that the only way to get the political party that they would wish to support is for them to be involved directly as members, influencing policy development and putting pressure on those elected representatives who failed to adhere to the socialist principles that we, in the GMB, want them to. Despite a massive effort over the past two-and-a-half years, it is clear that there is a long way to go before we achieve our goals.

However, within the GMB Wales and South West Region a number of initiatives have taken place. For example, workplace organisers have been encouraged to consider membership of the Labour Party at the trade union rate of £1.80 per month. Members have been invited to *Meet your Politician Evenings* designed to give our members access to those people who hold office in their areas. We have held film evenings where we have shown the *Spirit of '45*, and then followed the film with question and answer sessions with politicians and trade union organisers. Political events have taken place in the region aimed at getting young members involved and, in addition, our regional political office has held policy forums which allow members to express their view on those draft Labour policies that form part of the manifesto at election time. In fact, the next one is due to take place in July, and we will look at the policies that will form part of the Welsh Assembly elections in 2016. All of these things help, but the reality is that

Labour lost the general election and lost it badly. So we need to re-group, re-focus and work even harder to make the Labour Party the true voice of the working people.

We call on the CEC to introduce as many opportunities as possible to allow members to become involved in campaigns, for example, training courses and weekend schools that are designed to demystify politics and to show people that there is only one party in the UK that truly supports the working class, and that is the Labour Party. We need to consider joining the Labour Party, becoming the next generation of politicians and councillors, Assembly members and MPs. Who is going to deliver the change if they don't demand it? They need to stop whinging that they never listen, become elected and start making a difference for us all. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jennifer. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. K. LLOYD (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* This Congress seeks to encourage greater involvement of all members in local, national and elective politics by making political training and education available to all, and by taking a positive approach to organising the whole membership in political activities. No progressive movement can survive the corporate press lobbyists, corrupt party funding and Tory fear-mongers by fighting these forces on their own terms. The left must build from the ground up, using the re-vitalisation of communities and working with people to fill the gaps in social provision left by our uncaring elitist Government. A successful progressive movement requires our participation in our communities through Citizens' Advice Bureaux, housing associations, credit unions, food banks, local CLPs and, especially, in the face of the Tory majority determined to strip away our rights through the trade union Movement. Our communities can be made stronger through collective action and mutual support, and the labour Movement needs to be at the forefront of this.

Our greatest strength is our people. Hardworking trade unionists make our workplaces safer and fairer places to be every day. We can use that strength to make our society fairer, too. We have to encourage and support trade union members to get involved and to take action with voters. Politics is too important to leave to the politicians. Let us use our Movement's greatest strength, its people, to defend and revitalise our communities. Revitalising communities is not an election strategy. It is a programme for change in its own right. If it takes root, it can overcome even the most unsympathetic governments, but it will also make success more likely. If the labour Movement wants to reconnect and grow, it must be the change it wants to see. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the Executive is supporting this composite. Can I put it to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That's carried.

Composite 8 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: While Helen Johnson is coming to the platform, let me remind Congress and the delegates who are moving Motions 343, London; 346, Birmingham; 347, Southern and 350 Midland, to come to the front.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 4. Withdrawn motions: The SOC has been advised that the following motion has been withdrawn: Motion 268 — Reject TTIP, standing in the name of Southern Region.

Bucket collections: The amount raised from the bucket collection organised by GMB Wales & South West Region for the Velothon Cycle Ride in Cardiff next Sunday to raise funds for *Fighting Motor Neurone Disease* was 1,053 euros. (*Applause*) Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. I have just spoken with the General Secretary. Helen, we will double that on behalf of that charity. (*Applause*)

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 4 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to item 7 in Social Policy, which is Housing. I call Motion 343.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING

SINGLE HOMELESS CRISIS

MOTION 343

343. SINGLE HOMELESS CRISIS

This Congress views as a scandal the lack of affordable housing for single homeless people, which often leaves them having to live with their parent(s) or relatives long into their adult life, flat or house-share in overcrowded conditions or at worse, homeless and on the streets.

This Congress mandates the CEC to highlight these issues and vigorously campaign with all other trade unions, charities and campaign groups to ensure that all members of our society have the right to decent, safe and affordable housing.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH, *London Region*

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, I move Motion 343 on the Single Homeless Crisis. Housing in the UK is, probably, facing its worse crisis since the days of Rachmann landlords and city-slum clearances. Whilst Government policy seems only to encourage the building of new properties for home ownership and developers circumvent their obligations to build social housing, we often hear talk of “affordable housing”, but in the county of Hertfordshire where I live the average house price is £270,000. In Islington, where I work, the average price for a flat is over half-a-million pounds. The average price for a terraced house is £1.3 million. The average price for a semi-detached house is £1.8 million.

Private-sector rents in Islington have reached £562 per week for a three-bedroomed property. Rent in Islington is now 41% of average earnings and income. How can our members afford these costs? Meanwhile, the Tories’ response to the crisis is to squeeze the social-housing sector even further by forcing housing associations to operate right-to-buy. This is a disaster for our members for whom home ownership is only a dream or, as was said this morning, an aspiration. One of my branch stewards is a single man in his early 40s. He has worked for Islington Council as a gardener since leaving school, but whilst he left school over 20 years ago he has been unable to leave home. He still lives with his mum and dad. This is not only about his housing needs but it is about his need for a social and private life. It is also about the need for his parents to have a social and private life, but how can he, on a gardener’s wages afford a private-sector rent at over £500 a week? Where can he find the money to pay for a deposit or to pay for a mortgage? Housing is in crisis, but for the single the crisis is even worse. Extending the right to buy is not the answer. Building council housing is the answer. Regulating the private-rented sector is the answer. Give my steward some hope, Conference, and pass this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Thank you, Vaughan, for that. I am coming at it from a different angle. President and Congress, I second Motion 343. This issue is dear to my heart and causes me some concern. I am going to tell you a story about my family. I have a daughter who has four children and she lives in Cardiff, which is a brilliant city, by the way, but this happens in England as well. I am not singling out Cardiff, as I love the place enough to visit. Mandy has four children. At the time she got her two-bedroom flat she had two little children living with her, so she didn't warrant getting a bigger place. Then her son, Jess, came back to live with her. He sleeps on her sofa. He has to pay £50 a week from his minimum-wage job. Jess is 19 but cannot afford to live on his own. He cannot share with his sisters because the room is not big enough. Anyway, it wouldn't be right, so he is on the sofa. She has another son who is in foster care. He likes to visit mum as well. He stays on a chair. Social services know about this but have made no effort to help her. For the record, I live in Essex so I can't help at the moment. Eventually, hopefully, I can. However, the Government are making it impossible for young people to have the freedom to make their own choices, especially as they are abolishing help with rent for the low paid. Jess starts a new job today with Sky, and good luck to my Jess. No doubt this job is on the Government's minimum wage as well. This is a current policy. Please, CEC, lobby the Government for change. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Motion 346.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF HOUSING MOTION 346

346. DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF HOUSING

This Congress calls for all Housing Associations to be taken under democratic control within Local Authorities. All empty dwellings should also be taken over through compulsory purchase powers by the Local Authorities after being empty for a six month period; and Local Authorities should build houses year on year until the need has been exhausted.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Lost)

SIS. H. ROCHE: (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am moving my motion without the support of my region but, be that as it may, I am doing this very much for personal reasons; mainly, zero-hour contracts and homelessness, issues which are very, very dear to my heart. By moving this motion without the support of my region, I am suggesting viable accommodation for homeless and people on zero-hours contracts when there is a need. According to the Conservative Party, there are five million homeless people in Britain, and the average life expectancy for a woman, according to Shelter, is 43 years old, which is due to certain circumstances such as smoking and poor mental health as some examples. On the Gernos Estate, on the other hand, in Merthyr Tydfil, where my mother grew up in social housing after the breakdown of the mining industry in Thatcher's Britain, it is now 58 years. My mother grew up in social housing during the 1970s after moving her siblings and her mother out of a violent home life. My father is also a single parent in affordable housing, and the cost of this is between £85,000 - £90,000 a year. However, my MP for the Lib-Dems managed to help my father in 2005, when I was 15, in order to see me.

For those on zero hours, I would agree and I would move, it is impossible for a worker on a zero-hours contract to retain a mortgage on a low income, and this at a time when the Tories are implementing the Universal Credit, which will hit the working poor, also Tory-Shropshire Council workers, who are facing redundancies due to the cuts, and also the right-to-buy scheme which the Tories will be implementing, having said so in their manifesto. I call for Congress and also the CEC to consider its position on this motion. We cannot tolerate this situation as a union. We cannot tolerate every aspect of social

displacement, which I have described to you. Therefore, I move this motion. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hannah. Secunder?
(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)

HOUSING ESTATE REGENERATION MOTION 347

347. HOUSING ESTATE REGENERATION

This Congress notes that in council owned estates in London and in the South East council tenants and leaseholders face having their homes subject to being compulsory purchased so that the estates can be demolished and “regenerated” into expensive homes that neither tenants nor leaseholders can afford to rent or buy.

GMB Congress calls on the CEC to secure TUC and Labour Party support for tenants and leaseholders who are trying to protect their homes and trying to stop this land grab. A specific aim should be to stop cash starved Labour controlled councils using council homes as a cash machine to bridge funding gaps.

GMB Congress supports estate regeneration where the primary aim is to improve conditions for existing tenants and leaseholders and opposes it where the primary aim is for private developers to cash in and make loads of money while existing tenants and leaseholders face being kicked out of their homes.

GMB Congress calls for regions and branches to take an active hand to warn tenants and leaseholders in London and the South East estates what the Tories plans are for their homes.

L26 LB WANDSWORTH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. DAVIS (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (Applause) I move Motion 347. President and Congress, I am moving this motion as it is very personal to me, having lived in the Alton Estate. The previous Tory Community Secretary, Eric Pickles, said that council estates should be looked at as brown-field sites. That allows property developers to come in and, in their words, “regenerate the estate”. This is affecting 40 council estates in London where the value of property is very high. In reality this regeneration will always mean building expensive, private dwellings which local people would never be able to afford. The new homes are likely to be cramped because, unlike the existing council estates, they do not have to be built according to Parker Moray standards. Presently in Wandsworth there are three council estates of working-class people who are faced with being forced out of their homes. This is because of compulsory purchases, so that property developers and the council can profit from the re-development.

In the Alton Estate alone, 330 households are faced with being kicked out. I am asking why are these dwellings being knocked down? The council has, over the years, allowed the housing stock on the estate to fall into disrepair through lack of maintenance, and they are now using that as an excuse for them to be demolished. I believe it is to change the dynamics of the borough, actually to shift the balance of people towards the middle class. I believe that this is to give more votes to keep the borough Tory. The council admitted to this and call it “rebalancing the community”. The residents of the Winstanley and York Road Estates are also facing the same fate as the Alton Estate. These residents have been promised the world from the council. However, nothing has been guaranteed to the residents to confirm these promises. Typical Tories! We cannot have such an imbalance in Wandsworth. Therefore, I move this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Sonya, well done. I call the seconder.

SIS. J. OKOTURO (Southern): Congress, I am seconding Motion 347. The London Borough of Wandsworth, aka the flagship Tory borough, a favourite of she-who-must-not-be-named, is attempting to push forward this housing-estate regeneration agenda, which will ultimately become detrimental to the working-class people within this very affluent borough. Wandsworth Council are pushing this through because the Tory Government have classified these estates and 40 others across others as “brown-field sites”. Brown-field sites describe land that has been contaminated with hazardous waste or pollution, or is feared to be so. So by classifying these areas as such, the Tories are stating that they are tainted or unsalvageable. In fact, the reality is that they house vibrant communities of tens of thousands. It is the buildings themselves that need investment, not demolition. If we can’t stop this in Wandsworth, other communities will be next. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call the mover of Motion 350.

SELLING OFF OF SOCIAL HOUSING MOTION 350

350. SELLING OFF OF SOCIAL HOUSING

This Congress condemns the wholesale purchase of social housing by foreign investors resulting in mass evictions of long-standing tenants in pursuit of higher profits

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. JENKINS (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, I move Motion 350 — Selling Off Of Social Housing. Social housing, or council housing as we normally know it, is currently going through a process of being bought through wholesale purchases by foreign investors, which in turn result in mass evictions of long-standing tenants in pursuit of councils obtaining higher profits. I, myself, live in a council home and I know many of my colleagues do as do many of the members who I represent. This is not because we choose to, but it is because we cannot afford the private-sector rent prices and are unable to get a mortgage as we don’t earn enough. We are faced with having to do our homes up as they come with no carpets or even curtain rails. Trying to get the council to make improvements is another matter.

In order to generate income and in pursuit of higher profits, councils are now selling our homes from underneath us, even if we are long-standing tenants who take care of our properties. This results in us not even being able to put a roof over our heads.

We, therefore, call upon Congress to condemn the wholesale purchases of social housing to foreign investors resulting in the evictions of long-standing tenants in pursuit of higher profits. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 350 — Selling Off of Social Housing. Congress, this Government want expensive houses to be sold off to the higher bidder, which usually means foreign investors. All working classes will not be able to afford to live in the big cities and will have to compete to work from outside. The Government say that they will use the money for social housing. They are already trying to change rules and regulations to allow them to cut corners and to allow

them to build sub-standard housing. The housing stock that already exists will be the lower part of the market.

As you can see, people who need social housing will be ghetto'd into areas with less investment. I believe that we all have a right to a decent home and a decent environment. This Prime Minister said that the Tory Party is a party of the working people. What a load of bull! The only people they look after are the rich, the richer and the foreign richest. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Penny Robinson to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. P. ROBINSON (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 343 with a qualification. The CEC is asking for Motion 346 to be withdrawn and, if not, then the CEC position is to oppose. On Motion 343, the lack of housing availability, both public and private, is well reported in the CEC's Special Report on Housing that was agreed at Congress 2014. The qualification is that although the report was not specific on what element of social housing was most in need, it did confirm that there was a lack of social housing overall that affected different groups in society. Finally, on Motion 346, the CEC is opposing, because if compulsory were used as described in the motion, the effect would be to drain local authority budgets. The time factor to go through a compulsory-purchase acquisition is time consuming and has large legal expenses. This expense for the local authority would be better served in building new social housing as proposed in the CEC's Special Report on Housing agreed at Congress 2014. In addition, local government authorities will rely on funding from central Government for compulsory purchase, which would result in local government cuts affecting jobs and prosperity. Local authorities already have the power to execute fines for any properties that are left empty for periods of three months or more, both public, private and including housing associations. This income could then be used to build far more social housing in each authority on the basis of need. It is a far more pragmatic by holding buy-to-let property owners to account, and more cost effective. Therefore, Congress, we are asking you to support Motion 343 with the qualification that I have set out and oppose Motion 346.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Penny. (*Applause*) Congress, does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Congress accept it? Does Birmingham & West Midlands Region wish the right to reply?

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, bearing in mind what the CEC has said, I cannot afford to be pragmatic about how I feel and how I hold my values and how it is wrong that Congress should oppose this motion. The reason is that I have a friend from my schooldays who is extremely displaced and who I would consider as hidden homeless due to family breakdown. My supervisor is also struggling to support her 10-year old daughter. Taking my own values of this motion into account, I cannot shy away from how I feel. Therefore, I am asking Congress to vote with their feet and support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I am going to do it this way. Hannah, are you listening? Does Congress agree to support Motions 343, 347 and 350? The CEC are supporting them all. Is anyone against?

Motion 343 was Carried.

Motion 347 was Carried.

Motion 350 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Motion 346. Birmingham Region and their delegate has said that they do not wish to withdraw and she is putting it to Congress. The CEC is asking you to oppose this motion.

So I am now going to take the vote. All those in favour of Motion 346, please show? Those against?
That is lost.

(Lost)

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to agenda item 8.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: SOCIAL JUSTICE
TRANSFER OF WEALTH
MOTION 219**

219. TRANSFER OF WEALTH

This Congress calls on the Government to stop the wealth transfer of the country to the “super rich.”

NOTTINGHAM TEC BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. SOPER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 219 — Transfer of Wealth. Britain’s richest 1% has accumulated as much wealth as the poorest 55% of the population put together, according to the latest analysis of who owns the nation’s £9.5 trillion worth of property, pensions and financial assets. These figures also lay bare the extent of inequality across the north and south divide. The Office of National Statistics said that household wealth in the south-east has been rising five times as fast as across the whole country. Rachel Hore, Oxfam’s head of poverty in the UK, said that the new figures are a shocking chapter in the tale of two Britains. The charity recently reported that five billionaire families has the same wealth as 20% of the population. It is further evidence of increasing inequality at a time when five rich families have the same wealth as 12 million people! We need this Government to grasp the nettle and make the narrowing gap between the richest and the poorest a top priority. It cannot be right that in Britain today a small elite are getting richer and richer while us millions of others are struggling to make ends meet. I can tell you that 80% of properties are not affordable on the average wage. This gruesome concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority is fracturing our society, weakening our economy and giving disproportionate power to the richest. One of the biggest gaps between the rich and the poor is not just property but pensions. The top 10 own property averaging £350,000 in value and they have built up pension savings averaging £742,000. Yet the bottom 50% of households, not net property wealth, have just £4,000 in their pension pots.

Unless our policymakers adopt a clear goal of reducing the gap between the richest and the rest of us, they will have to govern an increasingly dysfunctional nation. I move, thank you. *(Applause)*

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

SIS. D. GRINNELL (Midland & East Coast Region): Congress, I second Motion 219 — Transfer of Wealth. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

This Congress calls on the Government to stop the wealth transfer of the country to the “super rich”. Inequality is more than just economics. Being born outside of the 1% will have a dramatic impact on a person’s potential. It will reduce life expectancy and work prospects. It will alter the culture that divides, making social mobility impossible. In the UK inequality is increasing, driving more people towards the poverty line. It is a known fact that because of the wealth of the top 1%, there is more poverty in the UK than in any other more equal rich nation. When the 1% takes more, there is less for the rest in the UK. The cuts required to preserve the position and wealth of the 1% are taking £19 billion a year out of the economy. One alternative to any of these cuts is to tax the 1% more so that they are taxed at the same rate

as the 1% are taxed in all of the rich countries. All parts of society live longer in countries that are more equal.

The *New Socialist* was revealing a consensus that inequality is bad for health. But the British Prime Minister announced that he no longer wanted the UK to assess the effect its policies have on social equality under the disguise of bureaucratic nonsense. Until the people of this country wake up and take responsibility, demanding that politics is based on the truth and the needs of the majority, we will always have the corrupt elite who serve only the 1%. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. I call Motion 221, to be moved by Southern.

BRITISH VALUES IN THE WORKPLACE MOTION 221

221. BRITISH VALUES IN THE WORKPLACE

This motion raises the inequality our members still suffer in the workplace. Our members are expected to take on board 'British values' that are passed down from the establishment with the idea that this is the only way to behave if you want to get on in life! But companies and company bosses have no respect or credence for those same values when demanded by the workers of this country.

This motion puts forward the ball and chain, wages and conditions of so called 'British values' for the workers, but for the many national and international companies it means selected values. To those companies riding on the backs of their employees to generate profit and greed are 'British values' to be treasured.

In short 'British Values' should be dismissed as another tool to bash the British workers with. Every worker in this country should be valued and respected for the role they play, both at work and at home. Throughout the years it is proven, without the Labour's many workers of this country, the greedy few would wither on the vine.

S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. WITTAMS-SMITH (Southern): President and Congress, I would like to move Motion 221 for GMB to actively speak out against the notion of British values. Politicians refer to "British values" in order to insert barriers to fairer social policy, but what are British values. So-called British values are a fiction created for the benefit of the controlling establishment to cling on the oppression of workers. We are led to believe that if we do not acknowledge these values, then we are less patriotic. This is not so. They are just another set of rules to entrap a workforce that needs no advice from the same establishment that promoted 200 years of slavery, the establishment that can always find money for bombs but insists that there is not enough money for houses, for healthcare and for libraries.

We know that there is still gross inequality in the workplace. So-called "British values" and there to lock the worker into the worker-boss mentality. Over the last 30 years 70% of British industry has been sold off. The only value big businesses sign up to is profit. If profit fails, they fall back on to the ruling class's values of sacking, zero-hour contracts and redundancies, they shut down, take the money and run. Congress, these selective values do nothing but smack of nationalistic rhetoric. It disguises the real intentions to lock today's workforce, our members, into obedience and pulls out a reactionary response from the public, causing a rise in support for far right-wing policies. Workers don't have a country. Workers in Britain are being force-fed austerity. The gains won by rank-and-file workers through the vehicle of unions and in combination with the socialist struggle are being stripped back one by one, here and abroad. Without fighting back, we will have nothing left at all.

Congress, I end with Articles 23 and 24 of the Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Article 23 states that everyone has the right to work through a free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to the protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of their interests. Article 24 states that everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including a reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Congress, these are the values we need in the workplace and they are enshrined in law. Dump the fictional so-called British values into the dustbin of history. Holding on to so-called “British values” holds us back from progressing into a society where workers don’t have to question where their next meal is coming from, whether they will still have a job next week or need benefits to top up their hard-earned wages, which they are then demonised for. How are these anybody’s values at all. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Aimee. Secunder?

SIS. K. ABU-BAKIR (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 221, British Values In The Workplace. Under the Con-Dem Government, their idea of British values took us back to Victorian times. This has meant exploiting the workforce. We have seen the rise of food banks and in-work benefits, with the vulnerable getting poorer and the rich getting so much richer. Under the current Conservative Government, this will only get worse. Please support this motion. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Paul Maloney would you please respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. P. MALONEY (Regional Secretary, Southern Region): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is support Motion 221 with the following qualification. The motion highlights the fact that while the rich and powerful speak of British values, I think our members know a little bit different of how often they practise it and preach it. In fact, they don’t practise and preach their British values. The qualification is, so far as the GMB and the trade union Movement is concerned, that British values are solidarity including international solidarity, social justice, inclusion, equality, a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work and freedom to join a trade union. The GMB will continue to champion such values but we must be clear that the rhetoric “British values” must not be empty rhetoric from company bosses living in tax havens and their political allies. Above all, we must not allow those terms to be used to pander to anti-immigrant prejudice or to stigmatise minorities. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking you to support the motion with that qualification. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, Southern Region, be very careful because you know who has just replied to you. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) I will now put Motions 219 and 221 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? They are carried.

Motion 219 was Carried.

Motion 221 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to agenda item 10, which is Political: General.

POLITICAL: GENERAL

UKIP

COMPOSITE 10

(Covering Motions 241 and 242)

241. UKIP Preys on Economic Anxieties (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

242. Stand up to UKIP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

UKIP

This Congress is concerned by the rapid growth of UKIP, a right wing, racist and anti-trade union party.

This Congress believes, while UKIP preys on economic anxieties, the only real answer to low pay and exploitation is stronger employment rights, protections and trade union solidarity. Congress asserts that trade unionists are uniquely positioned to challenge such propaganda.

We recognise that migrants are not responsible for the lack of affordable housing, the break-up of the NHS or the economic crisis. Congress rejects attempts to pit UK workers against migrant workers or claimants. It rejects the divide and rule rhetoric and notes that migrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits.

Congress further notes that UK benefits are among the lowest in Europe, making claims of ‘benefit tourism’ ridiculous.

Congress calls for a sustained campaign to challenge the politics of hate by:

1. Developing local community campaigns, following the 2015 general election, in conjunction with organisations such as other unions, the Labour Party, TUC Local Councils and BAME groups.
2. Counteracting voter disillusionment and UKIP’s policies for workers, highlighting voter registration and engagement through active campaigning and political education.
3. Tackling the toxic rhetoric around migration and placing a renewed focus on organising and recruiting migrant workers as happens in our Polish branch.
4. Continuing to counter the racist anti-immigration propaganda that originates in the overtly racist parties and groups in the UK and is now being adopted by some of the established mainstream parties like the Tories and UKIP

We note the formation of Stand up to UKIP, a broad based campaign which includes leading trade unionists, MP’s and community organisations which are coming together to oppose UKIP.

We agree to support and publicise initiatives called by Stand up to UKIP.

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region	to Move
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region	to Second

(Carried)

BRO. G. JARVIS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Composite 10 — UKIP. President and Congress, UKIP leader, Nigel Farage, has said that if Margaret Thatcher was still alive there would be no need for UKIP and that UKIP is keeping the flame of Thatcherism alive. Being an ex-miner from Barnsley and having seen the effects on local communities that the pit closures had, you can understand why, when he came to nearby Rotherham before the General Election, the police advised him not to leave his party office as they couldn’t guarantee his safety from the hostile crowd outside. *(Applause)* We will all have been delighted that Farage failed to be elected an MP for South Thanet, which was a real setback for UKIP. Anti racists everywhere will also have been delighted to see UKIP experiencing its post-

election turmoil, when the UKIP's chief of staff accused Farage of turning into a "snarling, thick-skinned aggressive man".

Farage is a Thatcherite. He has called for shock and awe spending cuts in the public sector and the privatisation of the NHS. Let's also be clear. UKIP is a racist party which constantly expresses hostility towards immigrants. With UKIP you get relentless attacks on Romanians and east Europeans, hostility to multi-culturalism and Farage has spoken of his discomfort of hearing foreign languages spoken on trains. While Farage insists that UKIP is not a racist party, prominent party members have been suspended from the party for racist tweets, which include one which said, "Most Nigerians are bad people". A former UKIP councillor, Rozanne Duncan, lost her place in the party for declaring, "I really do have a problem with people with negroid features". However, we can't under-estimate that horrible party that won nearly 3.9 million votes in the election. Farage grabbed 32% of the vote in South Thanet behind the Tories' 38%. Nationally they took 13% of the vote, which effectively makes UKIP the third biggest party in Britain. They have grown with the help of constant media attention by winning the argument that immigration is the problem, but we know that workers will always move from one part of the world to another to gain a better life for their families. Look at the millions of British workers employed all over the world.

We in the trade union Movement try to build unity in the workplace because we know that unity is strength. UKIP, with their racist scape-goating of immigrants divides us. So we need to inform those who are voting UKIP of their Thatcherite policies and we need to support activities and organisations actively opposing them. Stand up to UKIP. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. (*Cheers and applause*)

BRO. S. BREWER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Composite 10. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Colleagues, we can be in no doubt that UKIP has the attention of many UK citizens following their rapid growth in the 2015 election. Let's be clear. UKIP does not represent the views of the UK. It is nothing but a right-wing, racist and anti-trade union party. They pray on any opportunity to divide and conquer, with more often immigrants being the target and blamed for everything. They seek to turn UK workers against migrant workers. The reality is, more often than not, that the migrant workers are the ones being exploited, used by ruthless businesses to drive down wages and terms and conditions of the most vulnerable. We have a huge role to play, Congress, with many challenges. We must continue to counter such anti-immigration propaganda that racist parties and groups within the UK are fed with. We can do this by placing a new focus on organising and recruiting migrant workers. As we all know, by standing in solidarity, we can and will make a difference in tackling this toxic rhetoric around immigration.

Further, we should develop relationships within our communities, having community campaigns, working with like-minded organisations and community groups. We should also join forces with *Stand Up To UKIP*, a broad-based campaign which includes leading trade unionists, MPs and community organisations, which are coming together to oppose UKIP. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you, Steve. The CEC is supporting Composite 10. I am now going to put it to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried unanimously.

Composite 10 was Carried.

POLITICAL: IMMIGRATION & MIGRATION

THE FEAR OF IMMIGRATION MOTION 261

261. THE FEAR OF IMMIGRATION

This congress believes that UKIP, the Conservatives and now recently the Labour Party has used immigration as a tool of fear to ensure votes for their perspective parties. This has been done by ignoring the simple truth, research and factual evidence. This has been common practice in recent years and shows no signs of stopping even after the elections. Therefore we propose a proactive approach in dispelling the myths of immigration through a campaign highlighting the truth, training through the unions education programme and social media.

L16 LB GREENWICH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. OAKES (Southern): Congress, I am moving Motion 261 — The Fear of Immigration. President and Congress, immigration first started in 3000 BC with the Beaker people, who first settled in Britain. They were Britain's first migrants. Then in the Iron Age the Celtic people, called La Tène, settled in Northern Ireland. Then Romans, Jutes, Angles, Saxons, Vikings, Normans, Romany, French, Indians, Africans, Germans and Russian Jews all before the 20th century came to settle here. During the 20th century people from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, South African, the Caribbean, Kenya and Hong Kong settled here. In fact, I can go on all afternoon, which I am not. Why am I giving you a history lesson? It is obvious that we are a nation formed by migrants over five thousand years. *(Applause)* Immigration will be part of our history. It has been in the past, it is now and it will be in the future.

Recently, immigration has become the no. 1 conversation for many politicians and many members of the public. Migrants are being blamed for our economic problems, NHS funding, the housing crisis, the impact on lowering wages, unemployed, claiming benefits and anything else that anyone can blame them for.

During the election campaign Nigel Farage was late for a meeting in Wales and blamed the traffic jam on the M4 on immigrants. Picture the scene. Two Romanians — okay — a mother and a father, in Romania, and the father says, basically, "Let's move to the UK." The mother says, "Are we moving to the UK to better ourselves, to get decent jobs and to get a decent education for our children?" to which father says, "No. My life's ambition is going on the fast lane of the M4, driving 10 miles per hour to cause a traffic jam!" I mean, come on! It is not just about that. One of the headlines in the *Star* newspaper was: "*Asylum seekers eat our donkeys!*" *(Laughter)* Please! The *Sun* wrote: "*Asylum seekers eat our swans!*" What are we going to get tomorrow in the *Daily Mail*? What: "*Asylum seekers eat our pensioners!*"? *(Laughter)*

Congress, I am not saying it is all roses. It has been observed that immigrants put pressure on the housing crisis, but this isn't the fault of migrants. That was caused by Thatcher. By the way, it is going to get worse under Cameron when he starts selling housing association houses! *(Applause)* Let me make it clear. Migrants come here for one reason, and that's to work. Migrants are good for the economy, they create jobs and they fill skill gaps. They enrich our culture. They take the pressure off the ageing population. Without immigrants and their taxes, pensions would not be able to be paid, but it is popular. It is easy to blame immigrants for all our problems. The far right do it. It's UKIP's only policy. Tories do it, Liberals do it and, do you know what, what I was really, really angry with, Labour did it with their mugs! So, therefore, Congress, we need to start a campaign to highlight the truth of immigration. We need to train our reps through the union's education programme, spread the word and tell everyone who

will listen the truth about immigration. We must make them listen and we must never, never give up. Congress, I move. *(Cheers and applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, well done. Tomorrow's headlines will be: "The immigrants set Nigel Farage on the M4". *(Laughter)* Secunder.

BRO. K. GREEN (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 261 — The Fear of Immigration. On 1st January 2014 Bulgarians and Romanians were allowed to migrate to the UK. The British press during the 2013 post-Christmas news slump portrayed that we would wake up on New Year's Day, head-pounding and mouth dry, just like I am now, to find a gaggle of eastern Europeans at the end of the bed. Obviously, no such calamity has occurred. The notion that the first day of the New Year would be the exact moment that Romanians and Bulgarians stored the border en masse was and is bizarre. It may be amusing that a welcoming committee, headed by Keith Vaz MP, travelled all the way to Luton Airport to meet the first plane to arrive from Bulgaria. Victor Spiecel was the only Bulgarian on the plane who was emigrating to this country. There was never going to be an overnight flooding of the border. This is the movement of people, not the start of the January sales. Most of the fear of a fresh wave of immigration into the UK has been founded upon lies and half truths. For some time now, talk of immigration tourism to take advantage of the welfare state has been building. The truth is that this was simply a fairy tale. Benefits and the NHS have been reformed to an extent where they are hardly worth crossing Europe to exploit. Statistics show that the vast majority of migrants actually come to Britain to work.

In the first decade of the new Millennium migrants from the EU contributed over £22 billion to the UK economy, the same economy that was recently predicted to become the largest in Europe by 2030. However, that is only if immigration continues. In short, immigration is good for business. After all, can we really complain about the free movement of people within the EU when young British men and women go to the Alps every winter to work in ski resorts as migrant workers. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the CEC is supporting. I put Motion 261 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 261 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to agenda item 11.

POLITICAL: RACISM & FASCISM

EDL AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

COMPOSITE 12

(Covering Motions 262 and 263)

262. Don't let the EDL divide our Communities (London Region)

263. Islamophobia. (Southern Region)

THE EDL AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

This Congress recognises that fascist organisations such as the English Defence League and British National Party are trying to use the recent murders in Paris, France to whip up racism and direct hatred against all Muslims.

Violent attacks against UK Muslim citizens is on the rise. Mosques have been attacked by racist thugs. These fascists and racists should be condemned and opposed. We must not give a quarter to those who would judge an entire religion, race or nationality by the actions of a few.

We do not hold Norwegian Christians responsible for the actions of the fascist Anders Breivik, whose 2011 rampage left 77 dead. We do not hold white people collectively responsible for Timothy McVeigh, the US neo-Nazi whose 1995 Oklahoma City bomb killed 168 people, or for Copeland, the former BNP member who planted bombs across London in 1999. Nor should anyone suggest that Britain's Muslims are collectively responsible for the 22 May attack.

Far right groups have used world events in order to promote their own causes and have used Muslims in order to promote their agenda. Christian churches such as Westboro are not looked upon to represent all of Christianity but ISIS has been used time after time to taint all Muslims with having the same views.

The fascist organisations are trying to stir up trouble and racist violence do not care about the dead, or their families or the interests of any community. They want only to see Muslims attacked and a race war on our streets.

We condemn them and oppose their attempts to call "demonstrations" to exploit these issues. We also call on the media and politicians to stop using inflammatory language that feeds the fascists and racists. We must challenge Islam phobia wherever it raises its head.

The union needs to work with our Muslim members and outside groups to promote a true representation of the Muslim religion. We must reject those who want to divide our communities and set them against each other, and stand fast to the anti-racism, multiculturalism and respect for all.

Therefore we propose that a working party from union members is established to raise awareness and tackle these issues.

We call upon Congress:

- To back the statement "Don't let the EDL divide our communities", launched by Unite Against Fascism.
- To support and add the GMB's name to the list of organisations supporting the statement and further campaigns by Unite Against Fascism.

London Region
Southern Region

to Move
to Second

(Carried)

SIS. T. CHANA (London): Congress, I move Composite 12 — Don't let the EDL divide us. President and Congress, the English Defence League, the EDL, is racist. They have staged provocative demonstrations in towns and cities. They want to divide our communities. The EDL claims to oppose extremism, but their supporters have been filmed chanting "Burn a mosque down", as well as a series of arson and other physical attacks on mosques and community centres, in places where the EDL are active. The EDL is riddled with fascists. Its former leader, Tommy Robinson, is a former member of the Fascist British National Party, the BNP. Its founder EDL member, Chris Renton, is also in the BNP. Many more former members of the BNP, the Nazi National Front and other fascist organisations are also active in the EDL. The EDL is violent. Its core supporters are members of football hooligan firms who joined forces to form a racist street army. EDL demonstrations have regularly descended into violence. EDL supporters have rampaged through towns and cities, such as Stoke-on-Trent and Dudley, attacking Asian and black people, smashing windows of homes, shops and cars, and attacking mosques, and in one case a Hindu temple. Two Asian men were beaten up during an EDL demonstration in Dagenham, with one of them suffering four fractures in his face. In Luton Asian residents have had their windows smashed and EDL graffiti daubed on their homes. The EDL is a danger to all of us. It started by targeting the Muslim community. Now it is increasingly aiming its violence at other traditional targets of fascism, physically attacking trade union demonstrations, anti-racist and socialist meetings and anti-cut protesters as well as black and Asian people.

EDL former leader, Tommy Robinson, issued threats to school and college students who were protesting about tuition fees. The EDL thugs have even invaded a trade union and community bookshop — *News From Nowhere* — in Liverpool. The EDL tells lies. When it claims it has the support of groups, such as the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Jews and the LGBT people, it is lying. Its attempts to recruit from these groups have failed. The Jewish, the Sikh and other Hindu organisations have all spoken out publicly to condemn the EDL. When EDL supporters tried to whip up Islamophobia in east London under cover of a supposed LGBT Pride event, the LGBT local organisation stood strong together and cancelled the event. The EDL is trying to create a street movement to terrorise communities and attack socialist and trade union organisations. When we face and challenge the EDL and their fascist supporters and stop them reclaiming our streets, we collectively stand together with trade unions, our brothers and sisters in solidarity. We say with pride, with the LGBT community, that we are black, we are Asian, we are white, we are Jew, we are Muslim, we are European and we are gay. There are many, many more of us than there are of them. So let's unite and let's stop them. Please support, I move Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. S. OAKES (Southern): Congress, I second Composite 12. I am going to keep this sweet because it has been said beautifully by London Region. I am just going to add a little bit more to it. You only have to look at Twitter or at Facebook, it is not just the EDL that has this misconception. It is normal members of the public. This is what scares me, Congress.

What is fear borne out of? It is borne out of misunderstanding, and when you misunderstand something, you fear something. When you fear something, you get angry, you get scared and you hate it. The way to combat misunderstanding is through education. We need to work with our Muslim brothers and sisters within the union and outside agencies to give a true representation of the Muslim religion. Through this we can raise awareness and we can tackle this hatred. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Composite 13.

THE GROWTH OF THE FAR RIGHT IN EUROPE COMPOSITE 13

(Covering Motions 264 and 265)

264. The Far Right in Europe (*London Region*)

265. Growth of Neo-Nazism Across Europe (*London Region*)

THE GROWTH OF THE FAR RIGHT IN EUROPE

Congress notes the 2014 European elections resulted in gains by the far right parties across the EU, and is deeply concerned at the recent widespread growth of Neo-Nazism across Europe and beyond. The financial crisis and the continued anti-Islamic and anti-immigration propaganda continues to create a climate of extreme intolerant conduct.

The recent far right wing racist and Islam phobic Pegida movement in Germany as witnessed by the Dresden Marches, the outpourings of Marine Le Pen in France, and the invitation by Oxford Union for her to speak, the attempted murder of a Sikh dentist in a public place in the UK by someone shouting "white supremacy" demands that we all stand up against such behaviour. This demonstrates the climate of fear and hatred being spread by the far right across Europe, and the activities of Neo-Nazi groups in Great Britain, and many more.

Together with the ever present anti-Islamic trend, we are also witnessing a growing re-emergence of anti-Semitism.

The threats these groups pose is far greater in this technological age than was previously the case.

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I second Composite 13. President and Congress, the rise of neo-Nazism today in Europe today is borne out of the same seed which saw the rise of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy in the 1930s. Those seeds were envied now and are envied now. Depression hit those countries in the 1930s just as much as it hit in Britain. Scapegoats had to be found, and these scapegoats were Jews, gypsies, coloured and Muslims. These groups were persecuted in Germany and Italy, and let us not forget, colleagues, that Oswald Mosley tried to do the same in Britain, who was not as successful as Hitler or Mussolini but he had a strong following.

There is, probably, a similar type of envy causing the rise in neo-Nazism across Europe today, but it is much more widespread than it was in the '30s. There is a financial crisis, and scapegoats are still being sought. The Jews at one time were targets and the Muslims are still a target, but now any immigrant is fair game to be a Nazi. There have been cases, especially in Germany, of attacks on Roma and Balkan immigrants. It is envy caused by the financial situation, and it has to be confronted. Thankfully, the BNP lost their seat in the European Parliament, but other countries increased their Nazism seats. Greece's Golden Dawn, Denmark and its Danish People's Party and Austria, with its Freedom Party, are all anti-Semitic, all anti-Muslim and all anti-immigration. The problem is not helped by governments such as ours making immigration such a big issue. It breeds envy and resentment. Immigrants did not cause the financial crisis. It was bankers.

Congress, it is our job to get out in the branches, the workplaces and the streets to set the record straight. It is not scapegoats that we need, but sound and fair social government. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Euton. I call Kevin Buchanan to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. K. BUCHANAN (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting Composite 12, covering Motions 262 and 263, and Composite 13, covering Motions 264 and 265, each with a qualification.

On Composite 12, the qualification is that racism and attacks on minorities by racist and fascists is not just confined to attacks on Muslims. Whilst the CEC shares the concerns raised in the motions, they focus on one minority group, whilst our union policy is to oppose all forms of racism, to encourage activism in communities where our members live and work, to combat racist and fascist organisations and intolerance and misrepresentation of any religious or ethnic group.

The GMB has been proud to work with anti-fascists and anti-racist organisations, such as *Show Racism the Red Card*, *Hope Not Hate* and *Kick Racism out of Football*. The GMB's Equality Forum has done some good work in tackling these issues in communities and workplaces and will continue with this work.

In addition, the CEC wants to make a statement. The rising tide of Islamophobia and attacks on Muslims is abhorrent as the rise in anti-Semitism and attacks on Jewish synagogues in the UK, and the murders of Jewish-French citizens this January. All forms of racism and attacks on minorities must be resolutely opposed.

Turning to Composite 13, which focuses on campaigning against the rise of the far right and fascist groups across Europe, whilst the composites are in line with GMB policy and provide an important focus on the current increased tensions, Motion 264 calls on GMB to support anti-racist and anti-fascist groups, such as *Unite Against Fascism* and *Hope Not Hate*. The qualification is that any request for financial support or affiliation to organisations or groups should be referred to the CEC's Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Therefore, Congress, please support Composite 12 and Composite 13 with the qualifications I have set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Colleagues, does Southern Region accept the statement and qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the statement and qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Composite 13? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 12 was Carried.

Composite 13 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to Composite 14. I would like to invite Southern Region to speak as they withdrew their motion in favour of the composite.

POLITICAL: EUROPEAN UNION

THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (TTIP) COMPOSITE 14

(Covering Motions 266 and 267)

266. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) (*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*)

267. TTIP (*London Region*)

TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (TTIP)

This Congress notes with alarm the seemingly unhindered progress of the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) by the EU Commission on behalf of the EU members states – and due to be partly completed soon. Negotiations that could lead to a far more widespread fragmentation of NHS services, putting them into the hands of big private sector corporations.

Congress, TTIP focuses on removing the regulations covering labour laws, food contents, environmental standards and protections, working conditions and state-provided health, and education services, and there is widespread fear in Europe that EU standards might be weakened in some areas in a trade-off to satisfy powerful business lobbies and revive Europe's struggling economies. The TTIP negotiations, secret up to now, are a direct threat to existing standards and Trade Union collective bargaining. They signify privatisation on a massive scale and threaten the most essential rights won by the working class after generations of struggles.

A commission study estimates that a EU/US TTIP deal could boost the size of the EU economy by €120bn (£94bn - \$152bn) equal to 0.5% of the 28-member bloc's total GDP and the US economy by €95bn (0.4% of GDP).

The Commission acknowledges public concern about court cases in which powerful companies have sued governments over public policy. Swedish energy giant Vattenfall brought a claim against the German government over its move to decommission nuclear power plants. US tobacco giant Philip Morris sued the Australian government over the introduction of plain packaging for cigarettes.

In the UK, concern has focused on the National Health Service and the possible involvement of US firms in healthcare services.

A key element of the TTIP is the introduction of the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clause, which, if signed, would act as a tribunal/ arbitration outside and above the courts and parliaments of the EU member states, and will give multinational companies the right to sue governments over regulations that the companies object to. The ISDS

could see millions of pounds paid out to those big private sector corporations should NHS services be brought back into the public sector in the future.

Of course the idea of transatlantic trade may well be supported by those that would profit from it but for our health services based on values, principles and sustainability, it could be a financial disaster adding another nail in the NHS coffin. The union and a number of other organisations have been campaigning to exempt the NHS from the negotiations and Congress now calls for:

1. An active campaign to keep the pressure on and raise the profile of the calamitous affects the TTIP could have on the NHS.
2. Oppose Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanisms and a ratchet clause.
3. Call for the exclusion of all public services, including education and health, public procurement, public utilities and public transport (whether in public or private ownership) from the negotiations.
4. Demand no levelling down in relation to consumer, worker or environmental protection.
5. Insist on genuine consultation with civil society organisations, including trade unions.
6. On the CEC to work with like-minded organisations/groups, including other unions, TUC, ETUC, the Labour Party and Labour MEP's, to help animate, or improve, a national campaign of opposition to TTIP, opposing all detrimental aspects of TTIP and in campaigning for alternative EU trade and investment policies. Consideration could be given to an extraordinary national meeting of Trades Councils.

Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region **to Move**
London Region **to Second**

(Carried)

SIS. C. PINDER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Composite 14. What is The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership? In essence, it is a trade deal between the EU and the USA, which will remove red tape and sovereign powers from corporate contracts. Put simply, it is democracy for sale, and it has been negotiated behind closed doors between the EU and the USA.

TTIP has three pillars: deregulation, privatisation and corporate courts. The threats from TTIP are many. The Centre for Economic Policy Research estimated that a million jobs will be lost in the EU in favour of the lower wages and fewer workers' rights in the US. Deregulation will mean that food standards will suffer as US food regulations are far less stringent. Regulation acts as so-called barriers to corporate profit. Other barriers include environmental regulations, social standards and labour rights. Public sector contracts will be won by large US companies, which will operate a race to the bottom in terms of service and workers' rights with profit being the main driver. Companies such as Virgin are already operating frontline healthcare services for profit as a result of the Health and Social Care Act of 2012. If TTIP is ratified, then the NHS privatisation will be irreversible, and services such as education, environment, water and energy supply will follow.

TTIP will grant US and EU companies new powers to sue any future government in corporate courts for loss of profits. This will be called the Investor State Dispute Settlement. This will undermine the basic principles of democracy. The ISDS will bypass negotiated pay rates, working conditions, government policy and will render union activity in the workplace redundant as unions will have no right to be heard in the ISDS hearings. Previous cases from other treaties include US tobacco giant, Philip Morris, suing the Australian Government for loss of profits for legislating for plain cigarette packaging. Veolia is suing the Egyptian Government for loss of profits as a result of the country's decision to raise the minimum wage. The chill effect of governments anticipating litigation will override their desire to legislate in the

best interests of their people. Imagine going to do your weekly shop and having no choice other than to buy unlabelled genetically-modified food. Imagine needing healthcare but realising that you cannot afford an appointment. Imagine losing your job because cheap US imports have forced your employer to go bust, and what is this Conservative Government doing about it? It is welcoming it with open arms. Cameron has pledged to put rocket boosters behind TTIP. He has also said that any suggestion that TTIP will damage the NHS is nonsense.

To quote a famous son of Dublin, Edmund Burke: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men and women to do nothing”. Our founder, Will Thorne, said: “There’s a world of freedom, beauty and equality to gain where everyone will have the opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all.” Comrades, in the face of such an assault on democracy and workers’ rights, we must now, more than ever, step up the fight against Cameron, the Conservatives and many dark suits negotiating away our rights and standards. The GMB will not stand by in silence while they dupe the British people and negotiate away in secret our most treasured socialist principles of justice, equality and the right to decent pay conditions.

Comrades, we must expose TTIP for what it is and tell Cameron and his corporate cronies that our food standards are not for sale, our British jobs are not for sale, our workers’ rights are not for sale, our public services are not for sale and, above all else, first and foremost our democracy is not for sale. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. S. HURLEY (London): Congress, I second Composite 14. President and Congress, I am scared. I am scared because the EU Commission and not our elected Government or our elected MEPs are in negotiations with the US regarding The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. For those of you who don’t know, you are probably thinking, “What’s scary about that?” Congress, imagine returning home from a 14-hour day with only five hours between your next shift. You find your partner standing in tears at the door as she does not know how to tell you that your son died today as the family did not have enough money to pay for his medical treatment. On hearing this news, you have to go back to work without any sleep to be told that your pay has been cut. You have no one to help you, you have no legal protection and the trade unions have been destroyed. Congress, this example could become a reality. TTIP is not a new thing. In fact, it is a secret. This trade union deal has already been debated, amended and now is only in the public domain. As always, the GMB is well organised and has been working hard to try and change this document’s harmful content and has already engaged with unions in the UK and throughout Europe.

Comrades, only last year, I had the honour of representing this union at the European Federation of Public Services where TTIP was debated. Believe me, comrades, our views, our issues, our thoughts and our values are shared by our trade union European brothers and sisters. The public need to know the truth and we must tell them. Collectively, we must fight. I second. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. GOODACRE (Southern): Congress, I am speaking in support of Composite 14, although we wanted to go further and just stop the whole thing. In 2017 we will vote in a referendum as to whether the UK remains in the European Union or otherwise. Underlying this question are notions of sovereignty, as to what decisions are made in this country. TTIP risks us surrendering sovereignty to large multinational companies motivated solely by profit. We won’t be consulted on it in a referendum. We need to stop TTIP. Cameron describes a referendum as a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity”. This is a once-in-a-lifetime risk. As usual, it is down to the trade unions to do the decent thing and prevent this from happening. Please support Composite 14. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now ask Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to move Motion 270.

SOLIDARITY WITH GREECE MOTION 270

270. SOLIDARITY WITH GREECE

This Congress notes:

1. The austerity programme imposed on the Greek people by the troika of the IMF, the European Central Bank and the European Commission has seen unemployment rocket to 25% (and more than 50% among young people), the minimum wage and pensions slashed, public services sold off and in some cases – eg Greece's public service broadcaster – shut down.
2. Unelected forces from outside the country have dictated the terms on which the Greek government and economy can continue to function. Labour's equivalent in Greece, PASOK, has all-but collapsed under the strain. Collective bargaining has been undermined, and the unions' role reduced to fire-fighting, resisting closures, sell-offs and attacks on living standards.
3. The IMF has – without showing any remorse – accepted that the levels of austerity they helped impose on Greece were based on flawed economic models.
4. The large vote for Syriza, the left wing anti-austerity party, in the Greek elections.
5. European politicians have, disgracefully, been threatening the Greek electorate with dire consequences, including expulsion from the Eurozone, if they dare to vote the wrong way!

This Congress believes

6. Nowhere in Europe has suffered so much from the after-effects of the global financial crisis. Many Greek people have been left destitute, homeless and fearing for their futures. Some have left the country or abandoned their hopes of starting a family.
7. The austerity programme has undermined democratic control in the country something that has helped the neo-nazi thugs of Golden Dawn grow.
8. The vote for Syriza is a rejection of austerity.
9. Greece's debt needs to be reduced, and that continued austerity in Greece is not the answer. That means some form of rescheduling the debt, including debt forgiveness, must be arranged, and the Memorandum under which Greek national sovereignty and economic sustainability was removed needs to be replaced.
10. The costs of the global economic crisis need to be shared more fairly, and of course, there are problems in Greece that exacerbated the crisis, and are not externally imposed. Public debt was too high before the crisis. But that wasn't the fault of the people who are now paying for austerity: Greece needs to address the oligarchy that led it down the ruinous path it was already following before the global financial crisis hit, and whose members have so far not had to pay the price.
11. Austerity is hitting the working class across Europe. Germany has seen stagnant pay growth and the spread of low paid jobs. The UK's working poor and middle classes have also suffered from the ideological craze for slashing the state back to the size it was in the 1930s, the spread of low-productivity and zero hours jobs, and stagnating wages.
12. There are powerful forces mobilising against the interests of the Greek people.
13. The Greek working class deserve and need our support and solidarity.

This Congress resolves.

14. To affiliate to the Greece Solidarity Campaign and support its activities.

LEEDS GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. KIRKHAM (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 270 — Solidarity With Greece. Seven years on from the financial crisis one country in the European Union has suffered more than any other. The Greek people have been crucified by the bond-market speculators, the European Central Bank, the IMF and the European Commission, the so-called “troika”. The economy has been throttled, resulting in a 26.5% fall in gross domestic product since 2008. Despite the austerity programme being imposed on Greece, figures released for last year show an increase in debt of €317 billion, which, in relation to GDP, is a staggering 177.1%, clearly indicating that austerity measures are not working. This has provoked huge political instability. The right-wing Democracy and PASOK, the Labour equivalent in Greece, has been blamed for the austerity.

The political situation has polarised opinion with the growth of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn on the right. But far more important is the growth of Syriza, a left-wing anti-austerity party which swept into office earlier this year. The large vote for Syriza was not only a display of anti-austerity sentiment but it is symptomatic of a society in real crisis, a society that has been failed and put through the mincing machine by the capitalist system. The austerity programme imposed on Greece by the Troika has undermined one government after another. Even the IMF has accepted that levels of austerity already imposed on Greece were based on flawed economic models, but they are still intent on imposing further measures. The leaders of Syriza are being squeezed by the contradictions of the Greek economy and are under enormous pressure from big business and the banks to ditch their programme and carry out further attacks on working people.

The left wing of Syriza has put forward a mandate of its own and called on the government for the immediate withdrawal of the new troika memorandum and the immediate implementation of election commitments. These are to stop payments to blackmailing lenders and to write off the predatory government debt; to abolish as quickly as possible the memorandum and its laws and, thirdly, to cancel any plans of signing a new memorandum that, if it comes to Parliament for a vote, all Syriza’s MPs must vote against it. Finally and fourthly, the implementation of all pre-election commitments of Syriza, which will be funded by the radical measures against big business and the Greek ruling elite.

Comrades, the Greek working people need our support and solidarity. Every day that they can combat austerity, every child who doesn’t go hungry and every old person who has enough to eat is a victory for trade unionists in Britain as much as for Greek working people. Please accept this motion and affiliate to the Greece Solidarity Campaign and support its activities. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. M. HINCHCLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 270, Solidarity With Greece. I am a first-time speaker this week. (*Laughter and applause*) I have got chills and they’re multiplying. As all you karaoke fans know, that’s the first line of a song from *Grease*, but it also sums how the members of the ordinary Greek population are feeling at present. It is fair to say that Greece are in the shit, but it is not their fault. That word’s all right because Mary has already used it, so don’t worry. (*Cheers and applause*) The whole of Europe suffered at the hands of those financial wank...— sorry — bankers! Other countries faired better because they are diverse in nature, whereas Greece uses tourism to fund the country, in the main, backed up by using the production of extra virgin olive oil. It was the global financial crash that broke Greece. It was the EU that set the rules for the European entry into their club, not Greece. It was the EU that encouraged all those nations that sit inside the geographical European land mass to ditch their old ways and to join this club, but not Greece.

The EU is supposed to be built around common aims, where nations come together to support the greater good and one another in their hour of need. Colleagues, this is Greece’s hour of need. They did not break

the world's financial markets. The world's financial markets broke them. Our poor and less fortunate neighbours do not need us to use them as cheap labour. They need our help and all of us in the EU must give that help freely. I second.. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Kathleen Walker Shaw to respond.

SIS. K. WALKER SHAW (GMB European Officer): President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting Composite 14, covering Motions 266 and 267, and Motion 270 with the following qualifications. On Composite 14, the substance of both motions reflects the detail of GMB's concerns about the proposed EU/US trade agreement, TTIP. GMB has been at the forefront of the trade union campaign against this and other EU trade agreements, and it has played a major role in crafting the policy of the 2014 TUC Congress on this issue as defined in Composite 3, which GMB seconded.

The qualification on Motion 266 is that GMB's position goes further, and it is that of outright opposition to TTIP and all other EU trade agreements currently under negotiation that contain the same threats as *this*.

The qualification on Motion 267 of the composite is that it refers to consideration being given to an extraordinary national meeting of the trades councils. However, the CEC would not be in a position to convene or organise a specific meeting of the trades councils.

Turning to Motion 270, the motion highlights the harshness of the austerity policies forced on Greece as a result of the bailout, and the devastating effect this situation has had on the Greek people. The motion, rightly, calls on GMB to show support and solidarity with the Greek working class. The qualification is that the motion calls on the GMB to affiliate to the Greece Solidarity Campaign. However, any request for affiliation should be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Therefore, Congress, please support Composite 14 and Motion 270 with the qualifications I have set out.

THE PRESIDENT: Kathleen, would you wait at the rostrum while I take the vote. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the qualification on Composite 14? (*Agreed*) And the qualification on Motion 270? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Composite 14? (*Agreed*) In that case I call for the vote on Composite 14 and Motion 270. Does Congress accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Those against, please show? They are carried.

Composite 14 was Carried.
Motion 270 was Carried..

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Kathleen has been our European Officer based in Brussels for over 22 years, working to ensure that our members and their families gain employment, social rights and protections. Kathleen will update us on key European issues. Kathleen Walker Shaw, please address Conference.

ADDRESS BY SIS KATHLEEN WALKER SHAW

SIS. K. WALKER SHAW: Thank you, Mary. (*Applause*) President and Congress, GMB has spent over 20 years working at the coalface in Europe, campaigning for rights for our members; four weeks paid holiday, a 48-hour week, equality and anti-discrimination laws, TUPE protections, collective redundancy rights, agency-workers' rights, maternity rights, part-time and fixed-term workers' rights and a raft of health and safety protection. Yes, all of these rights came from Europe in the halcyon days of the 1990s

and under the stewardship of Jacques Delors. But for too long the balance of the social and economic dimensions of the EU have been out of kilter with the social rights the poor relation to business interests. Inequality has been further entrenched with the global economic and financial crisis, with governments across the EU imposing cuts and austerity measures even though they are clearly stifling rather than stimulating economic growth and job creation.

The fallout of this botched handling of the crisis has created a growing social crisis, and the lid on the pressure cooker is now blowing in many countries. Greece has said “Enough is enough!” and elected the anti-austerity Syriza party into power in January, and similar parties are doing well in Spain and other hard-hit countries. GMB opposes the austerity agenda in solidarity with our EU trade union colleagues and MEPs. We want to see investment in good jobs, services, greater equality and decent pay that will drive economic recovery.

The dominance of corporate interests over public interests in the EU is nowhere more clear than in trade policy. GMB has been at the forefront of campaigning against EU and global trade deals, including TTIP and other agreements like SITA, which we see as the Trojan Horse for all the dangerous elements in TTIP. We have shaped TUC Congress policy in line with our position, and we are currently seeking amendments to TTIP in the report that is going through the European Parliament on Wednesday.

GMB has an unrivalled reputation with the British trade union Movement for campaigning at EU level to protect and promote the interests of our members, because we know that looking after our members and their families goes well beyond the workplace. As well as influencing the development of the rights I mentioned before, we have also been campaigning at European level to stop the demonization of migrant workers, and we say damn those who exploit, not the exploited. We take to task the global scandal of tax-dodging companies, the likes of Amazon. We must regulate the fat-cat bankers and their casino capitalism that has driven eye-watering inequality across Europe. We must stop the exploitation of workers and the undercutting of terms and conditions with the abuse of agency workers and posted workers.

We have helped our members take their campaigns to Europe and we have seen Eddie Marnell take the case of the gross miscarriage of justice of the Cammell Laird workers to the Petitions Committee of the European Parliament. We have taken the blacklisting campaign to Skanska’s annual general meeting in Sweden, backed up with Swedish workers’ unions. We have featured in an Irish document exposing the exploitative practices of agencies such as Atlanco Rimec. We have supported GMB members in the Southern Region, the Marks & Spencer’s distribution plant in Swindon, taking the exploitation they are undergoing under the Swedish Derogation of the Agency Workers’ Regulation to the EU Commission officials, and telling them to stop it.

GMB takes our campaigns for social justice as far and as high as they need to go, but it is clear that the challenges we face both at the national and European level are about to increase. We are at a crossroads with the EU. The European elections in 2014 showed us that disenchantment with the direction that the EU is taking was not restricted to the UK, but is increasingly being felt in many European countries. People across Europe brought into the idea of the European Union because they wanted to see peace, improved living and working conditions, social and economic progress and prosperity for all, not just the few. But the current reality is far from the vision. The growth of Euro-sceptic and far-right parties, including UKIP, on the back of this disenchantment cannot be ignored. Britain now faces a referendum on its future in the EU, and this could be sooner than 2017. The Tory Party plans to trade our future on the outcome of negotiations, on a range of reforms, followed by an in or out referendum. Few could disagree that the EU needs reforming if it is to survive, but the shape and directions that the reforms will take will either seal or sever trade union support for the EU. Congress, there is an ocean between the sort of Europe that we want to see and that which the Tories want to see. They intend to rob us of the vital

employment rights and protections we have fought decades for; our rights to the four-weeks paid holiday and other protections under the Working Time Directive as well as equal treatment for agency workers. We will find that zero-hours contracts, the exploitation of migrant workers and the undercutting of terms and conditions will be the order of the day.

The CBI President, Michael Rake, said two weeks ago that we should turn up the volume and speak out clearly and in language that people understand about the EU. So the message from this Congress to the British Government, to the CBI, to EU negotiators and governments across Europe is this: “We support a social Europe, and you need to understand, and quickly, that if you attack our social and employment rights, then GMB members in this hall, and trade unionists across Britain, will not be queuing up to vote yes, to stay in an EU that has nothing in it for them. This is not a bluff and it is not an idle threat. It is a statement of fact. Is that loud and clear enough for you, Michael?” Thank you. *(Applause)*

MEP Video Greeting

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Kathleen has worked closely with our Labour MEPs who have given us tireless and loyal support over many years. They are meeting in Strasbourg this week but send us Congress greetings through the video link, which you will now see. *(Video is shown on the screen)*
(Applause)

I thank all the MEPs who made their contributions. I worked with Glenys Wilmot on the NEC, I have known her for years and she is a fantastic worker on behalf of the GMB.

We have an announcement. Will Paul McCarthy come to the rostrum.

BRO. P. McCARTHY (Regional Secretary, North West & Irish Region): Congress, I want to let everyone know that last night that a magnificent €1,830 was collected for the staff and those who were serving last night. *(Applause)* We have rounded it up to €2,000. Perhaps you would like to make some kind of announcement, President.

THE PRESIDENT: We will double that figure. *(Applause)*

BRO. McCARTHY: Finally, we are ensuring that as many people who were on duty last night, including agency staff, are encouraged to join the union. We do have members here and some of the supervisory staff and senior managers, who are union members, are foregoing any money whatsoever. We are going to do our best to make sure that everyone last night gets a payout. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Colleagues, I know that last night we said thank you to the staff, but all the staff, right the way through this complex, have been absolutely wonderful. Nothing has been too much work for them and I applaud them.

I know we are running a little late. Blame the President of Ireland for it. He could have gone on for another two hours if he had wanted to, and I would have let him.

All have a good evening. Congress is suspended until 9.30 in the morning.

Congress adjourned for the day.