

GMB

CONGRESS 2016

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SIS. MARY TURNER MBE
(President)
(In the Chair)
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Held in:

Bournemouth International Centre,
Bournemouth

on:

Sunday, 5th June 2016
Monday, 6th June 2016
Tuesday, 7th June 2016
(Sectional Conferences)
Wednesday, 8th June 2016
and
Thursday, 9th June 2016

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PROCEEDINGS
DAY FOUR
(Thursday, 9th June 2016)
.....

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FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
THURSDAY, 9TH JUNE 2016
MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please. There are some empty seats this morning! Come on now, settle down. It is the last day. You may have an early day today if you behave. I will start off with the announcements, colleagues.

I would like to thank all those who went to the Pellacraft stall and bought the chargers for Little Alfie. They raised over £2,000. Well done all the delegates. *(Applause)*

The other thing is just to announce that Jerry Nelson, our officer who has retired, has had his major operation and I understand from the information I am getting that he is doing okay. Let's wish Jerry well. *(Applause)*

Now, Congress, first of all, fill in the monitoring form and return it to the Regional Secretary so we know if you are here or not.

Now before moving on to Congress business we will now draw the delegates questionnaire; each win £100. It has gone down since yesterday. I am going to ask Tim to draw the raffle.

Somebody left *this* last night. I think it is little Daisy which is from the Retired Members raffle. Whoever wants Daisy come and get it. Have you lost Daisy? Poor Daisy. She was so unhappy last night on her own!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Good morning, everybody. The first winner is Mark Bowler, Wales & South West Region. *(Applause)* Please come up and receive your money. The second one is John P. Donovan, Southern Region. Come on, John!

THE PRESIDENT: Fiddle! If one comes out from Yorkshire we are going to put it back! *(Laughter)* There is a shop down the road, John. There's a nice dress down there I would like. Okay?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: The next winner is Sarah Young, Yorkshire Region. *(Cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Honestly, I wasn't aware of that. Fiddle!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: The last one is Ruth Pitchford, North West & Irish Region. Come on, Ruth. *(Applause)*

Well done, everybody, and thanks very much for completing this information. It is really useful to us.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I think that is all the announcements. You will have to be kind to me for a while. I left my glasses in the hotel.

Congress, I will move now to Social Policy and the Energy Market. I will be calling 262, Fracking, Wales & South West, the Reduction in Subsidies, 264, Southern Region, and 265, Northern Region. Can the movers and seconders please come to the front. Then I will be calling Bob Welham, North West, to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SOCIAL POLICY: The Energy Market
FRACKING
MOTION 262

262. FRACKING

This Conference agrees that as a Union with close ties with the Gas Industry we feel that as fracking has now developed from exploratory to production that we should do our utmost to recruit and protect the workers within this new industry. However, due to the environmental issues that surround this new energy resource, Conference agrees that we should not endorse or promote the industry.

AVON & WESSEX BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. GRAHAM (GMB Wales & South West): I am a first time delegate and a first time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you very much. President, Congress, most of us here would accept that gas has a crucial part to play both in terms of supplying the country's energy intensive industries and meeting our household needs. The economic and dependency realities of gas are therefore beyond dispute and Congress recognised in Dublin last year the key debating point is not where we source this energy from. Significant reserves of shale gas have been identified across large areas of Britain but the process of fracking has been surrounded by controversy. Some of these controversies arise, quite rightly, from the concerns of environmentalists who point to the cost of using huge amounts of water in this process and the contamination likely to result in an escape of potentially carcinogenic chemicals and the causing of small earth tremors. Others, like Friends of the Earth, argue against the reliance on fossil fuels and are for greater investment in renewable forms of energy. I will return to the balance of consideration shortly but one thing is clear, and that is the fact that shale gas drilling and development can have a positive economic impact in terms of job creation.

The American experience in the States, such as Texas and Pennsylvania, showed the need for skilled workers on drilling crews and it provided a distinct boost to the local economy which led to an increase in employment opportunity in ancillary industries. Yes, there is some doubt about the incidence of transient workers which thwarts the use of local labour but, undoubtedly, there is a direct and indirect stimulus to the economy linked to this extraction process at a time when job diversification is important to the British economy and so many traditional jobs disappear never to return. Fracking has the possibility to make a supportive contribution to job growth.

Similarly, it would be beneficial to the GMB and recruitment organising objectives to capitalise on the extra jobs created by devising a coherent strategy within the sector. Also, it adds another internal target to our list of industries within this energy and utilities portfolio. This then ensures that workers have the protection of an effective

GMB representation and a negotiation set-up. In other countries the absence of an organised workforce has led to the abuse and the exploitation of these workers with basic rights being denied to the employees involved in this activity. It would be difficult not to appreciate the health and safety risks confronting those who work in this gas industry, such as exposure to harsh chemicals and radiation, and having to work countless hours in strenuous conditions.

In America, for example, workers suffer accidents by reason of working in an industry that pays no value to their safety and the lives of those who deliver the profits for the companies concerned. Previously injured workers basically write their own safety training manuals in their own blood, in a sector where they are expendable and somebody is always there to take their jobs. Fracking can be a toxic process, both regard to the nature of the process itself and the way workers are treated.

Should fracking develop and expand in this country, then those who are contracted to work in this industry must have the support and protection of the GMB. Therefore, the need to us to recruit and organise is imperative and that is what we must do. This motion asks the GMB should not endorse or promote fracking due to the intended environmental concerns but recognises that gas has a major role to play in future decades and, quite simply, it has to come from somewhere.

If fracking is developed as a means of accessing gas, then there must be an unequivocal commitment to safety rules and development of the skills and protection of these workers. Congress, it is on that basis that my region is prepared to accept the qualification made by the Central Executive Council. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barry. Secunder.

BRO. N. EVANS (Wales & South West): President, Congress, Barry has covered the main points that need to be considered in the fracking debate and was extremely covered in last year's Congress. I would just like to add a little to what he has said. GMB has a long and proud history of collective organising within the gas industry dating back to our very foundation at Beckton by Will Thorne and others well over a century ago now.

As the nature and form of this country's energy supply changes then we as a trade union need to consistently review and, where necessary, revise our approach to the recruitment, organisation, and mobilisation of these workers who facilitate the provision of fuel to industrial and domestic outlets. Further shale gas developments would see a significant increase in the demand for geologists, drilling engineers, and construction workers required for onshore operations, a repeat of what happened in the North Sea in the early 1970s.

The subject of fracking will, obviously, continue to provoke discussion as the advocates of renewable and shale gas spar against one another in the quest for the solution in this country's energy needs. Our aim must be to adapt a pragmatic stance by seeking to achieve an outcome of job creation, reduce the emissions, and a secure energy environment. Congress, please support this motion as qualified. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. 264, Southern.

**THE REDUCTION IN SUBSIDIES TO RENEWABLE INDUSTRY IS
WRONG AND NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE UK OR THE RENEWABLE
INDUSTRY
MOTION 264**

**264. THE REDUCTION IN SUBSIDIES TO RENEWABLE INDUSTRY IS WRONG AND
NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE UK OR THE RENEWABLE INDUSTRY**

This Conference welcomes that in December 2015, the UK government along with another 150 nations, signed a historic climate change agreement to hold global temperature rises to below 2°C and endeavour to only reach 1.5°C and would individually commit to reduce emissions. There would also be regular reviews, \$100bn a year would be mobilized to help poor countries to adapt, carbon markets would be developed, forests protected and renewable energy given the biggest boost it has ever had.

Yet within days the Conservative government decided to cut by 65% the subsidy paid to householders who install solar panels on their roofs from February 2016, even though they were warned by the Department of Energy and Climate Change that this would cost 18,000 jobs in the renewable sector.

Not content with this, they also went on to cut a second subsidy scheme, known as the Renewables Obligation. This scheme has also been cut for both small-scale and large projects, angering both the solar industry and environmentalists, who have declared this change as huge and misguided. To date many small and medium sized renewable companies have stopped trading and 6,000 were lost by January 2016. This change is short sighted and not in the interests of climate change, the UK as a whole, UK manufacturing, domestic energy users, or skilled workers.

This Congress demands that the GMB and CEC campaign to have these subsidies reinstated as a matter of priority, so that we can invest in our future and reduce global warming and climate change.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. REYNOLDS (Southern): Congress, President, I am moving a motion on behalf of the Croydon branch. This motion is one that is important on many levels. It is on the reduction of subsidies to the renewable industry. These reductions are wrong and not in the interests of us, the UK, or the renewable industry. At the Paris Climate Conference COP 21, in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first ever universal legally binding global climate deal. However, our government, our current government, the Tories, took severe steps mere days later that threatened jobs and undermined renewables. They also undermined that revolutionary conference. Governments across the world agreed to strengthen society's ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

The Conservative Government certainly have not kept this agreement, cutting 65% of the subsidy paid to householders who install solar panels on their roof from February 2016 as well as further cutting the renewables obligation. This Government are punishing those who want to protect and preserve our environmental future. Meanwhile, fossil fuels still have government subsidies. The GMB must act and

campaign against these drastic changes that are affecting not only jobs in the UK but reducing climate change efforts.

The UK receives many different types of EU funding for renewables, for example, through the European Energy Programme for Recovery, UK receives €404m for offshore wind interconnections, and more. Through the European Regional Development Fund, ERDF, the UK gets €810m for the transition to low carbon economy. The UK is also the biggest recipient of the European Investment Bank climate money. Britain takes 24%, yes, 24%, of €7.2bn invested by the European Investment Bank in renewable energy. If we were to leave this funding would be at risk while we would still need to carry on our decarbonisation policies.

I ask you to imagine what we would be left with without this type of funding, without our Labour MEPs and without representation at a European level. The ignorance and short-sightedness of our Tory Government will affect future generations as well as affecting us now. We must make the government answer to the country and stand up for what was agreed in Paris. We must fight as the GMB and the workers to reinstate, protect, and enhance subsidies for the renewable industry. There is more than just jobs and people's future at stake. The future of the planet is at stake too. Support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. J. DONOVAN (Southern): First time delegate but now third time speaker. *(Applause)* Madam President and conference, just a little thing about renewables: I have a few points here. The sun, for example, our nearest star, you may know or not know, gives out 3.5 tons of energy every second, that is light, heat, warmth, and everything else. It actually, they reckon, will last about 190 billion years. That is enough time for most of mankind to go out the window and actually for the Tories to realise that the poor are important and not just people to be dealt with in a bad way. *(Applause)*

As I said, there are a few things on there. The Tories say one thing very goodly and then they start off with other things, for example, as my colleague said they remove subsidies on solar panels and on other renewables like tidal power and wind power. The GMB itself is obviously, as it rightly says, going to be a 21st century union so I suggest something to the conference and chair that possibly they should look very seriously at putting solar panels on all the regional offices, on all our branch offices. This will not only, obviously, cut our costs – initially, it will cost a bit more but in long term it will cut our costs – we can also possibly tender for a British company to do it, that way increasing jobs, and also of course, hopefully, get more members as well. So far as I am concerned, everybody is a winner, to coin a phrase on that one. *(Applause)*

Finally, I do think that we should be looking slightly wider on renewables. It is about things like council houses. In Brighton council houses have a lot of solar panels on the roof. It provides, obviously, cheaper fuel for the actual people who live there but also it is cheaper for the councils. I earnestly beg you to think about this. I second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Tim, get your overalls on! The movers of 265, Northern Region?

**OFFSHORE WINDFARMS
MOTION 265**

265. OFFSHORE WINDFARMS

This Conference calls for Government to commit to state investment in the Offshore Windfarm industry to help with the UK's energy needs and provide vital jobs for workers. If the state provides the kinds of commitment and support that Scandinavian countries give, Congress believes this will bring in UK companies willing to invest and employ, so that vital manufacturing and construction jobs are created.

H40 NORTHUMBERLAND LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. SERRECHIA (Northern): Congress, the offshore windfarm industry has great potential for being integrated to UK manufacturing. In the UK we have tremendous plant capacity to manufacture and to provide maintenance of them. In the Northern Region our shipyard facilities and employment base are second to none. Our skills base is world class and our economy should seek to preserve vital skills. Congress, in our region we have constantly shown our ability to adapt, to adjust skills to meet the need of the times and preserve jobs. There is vast potential of this offshore sector that we can build and maintain onshore.

We appreciate the work of some of our Labour MPs who are working to bring the sector to our region but, Congress, we know that central government must give certainty to the market and recognise the importance that offshore windfarms add to a balanced UK energy supply. We will work with those who are committed to making this a thriving industry and for the UK to emerge as a world leader instead of giving away the sector to countries such as Scandinavia because central government will not support the sector.

Congress, this country should become a key player in the sector and we have the yards and facilities to beat off the competition. We believe that a thriving offshore windfarm industry in the UK will boost skills and regeneration of communities. These are essential if our regions are to build stable, high skilled, high wage jobs and a stable future for our members and their families. Please support. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. D. LEYLAND (Northern): Congress, as the mover said, we want the UK to be at the heart of the offshore windfarm sector. I make no apology for saying that we want our region to be at the heart of it all. We have the facilities that can provide the perfect arena to win contracts for design and build, and also thousands of jobs will be created, but it needs central government to support investment. After what has happened in the steel industry, you would think the central government would see the value of the investment. Many of the facilities that are available could involve turbine

manufacturing, platforms, and installation process. The sector could employ skills as part of a balanced energy policy within the UK.

What has happened is that central government has not provided the kind of support that countries like Norway and Denmark have. Scandinavia now leads the way in the offshore windfarm industry. The UK could be a major winner if there is a different approach so that UK has a secure and affordable future in energy. I second.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Darren. Okay, colleagues. On this issue I am going to ask does anyone wish to speak against or support? Please come now.

BRO. P. DUFFY (GMB Scotland): Good morning, Mary. Comrades, renewable energy, be very careful. Two years ago my wife and I decided that we would help the environment by changing to renewables. We got the panels on the roof and then we decided to get what they call an air source pump. I had an aerated heating system in my house with a gas boiler but the moment I enlisted with the company my electricity bill trebled, it actually trebled. The heat is absolute rubbish during the winter. My wife and I have cardigans on, that is how bad it is. Right now, as I say, we have the trading standards on to this company. I would be very, very careful when it comes to renewables. The panels as well, you get virtually nothing back off them. You get virtually nothing off your electricity. As far as renewables go, I can see the idea about the environment because that is why we went for it, but the cost, people like me cannot afford that. I am 71, I am a pensioner. I know I do not look it but never mind that! (*Laughter*) (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else?

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish): Speaking in support of Motion 262, Fracking. Fracking is a very difficult issue, I would have thought, particularly up the North West. I support it in the fact that if we have members in there we must do everything we can to support them. The problem is with fracking they do not want to do it under the middle of Westminster. (*Applause*) My problem is I do not want it in my back garden either. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else? No? Now, now, I did say come to the front.

SIS. K. COLEMAN (Midland & East Coast): Hello, everybody. I am a first time delegate and a first time speaker. (*Applause*) I understand I only have two minutes and I have not prepared anything and I do not have all the facts to back everything up, but I recently heard about fracking in my area. I have been along to one meeting about it. I thought it did not affect me so I have never paid much attention. I am absolutely mortified at the long-term effects of fracking in the areas where people live. (*Applause*) Like the gentleman said earlier, the people that make these decisions live in Westminster and they are not going to put fracking in the middle of London. They are going to put fracking in the environments where we live that endangers our homes, our environment, and our health. There have been a lot of reports written from leading researchers about fracking in America and other countries. It has been banned in Germany, it has been banned in France, and it has been recently banned in

Scotland, and a lot more countries have banned it. It has not been banned because it has safe practices. The companies that are involved with this fracking have no respect for the health and safety guidelines that are put in place for the people that work for them and the people that this process damages. (*Applause*) If we come out of Europe, then those guidelines are going to be cut even more. So, I urge everybody, it is our responsibility to find out just what fracking is all about. Thank you.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Karen, well done. I forgive you now. I call Bob Welham.

BRO. B. WELHAM (CEC, Manufacturing): Follow that! I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 262, Fracking. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We would support the first sentence but our qualification is on the final sentence of the motion, which asks Congress not to endorse or promote the industry. This opposes the intentions of the CEC Statement on fracking which was carried at last year's Congress where our priority is to organise in the industry. That statement took a balanced view and recognised that the industry was still new and changing. Therefore, our priority will always be that if the shale gas industry becomes significant we will seek to recruit and organise there just as how we have organised and supported gas workers in the industry throughout our rich union history. Therefore, Congress, please support Motion 262 with the qualification. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bob. Wales & South West Region, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I put 262, 264, and 265 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against? That is carried.

Motion 262 was CARRIED.

Motion 264 was CARRIED.

Motion 265 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I introduce our next speaker, after that speaker I will call 159 and 160, and then Jim Clarke to reply; Northern Region to move on 159 and London on 160. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Justin Bowden, our new National Secretary, from the Commercial Services Section Conference. Justin.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT

BRO. J. BOWDEN (National Secretary): Good morning, everybody. Reporting back on the Commercial Services Section Conference and very proud to be the new Commercial Services National Secretary, the best section in the GMB, Malcolm told me to say! (*Applause*)

Mary, I am delighted to report back to Congress on a superb conference on Tuesday, brilliantly chaired by the section president, Kevin Flanagan, elected unopposed for a further four years. (*Applause*) I am very grateful, too, to our 118 delegates, for making the new National Office team feel so welcome. We heard from 61 different speakers, 18 of them first-timers although you would not have known unless they told us so, and we debated a total of 15 composite motions and emergency motions covering every sector of commercial services.

Over the course of the day conference was attended by more than 230 people with our visitors as varied as the delegates on the floor. This was a vibrant, inspirational, dynamic, and disciplined conference with hard-hitting speeches supporting hard-hitting motions, and with real debate, and where officers were deliberately kept to a minimum in favour of hearing from the activists. We heard from Danny Faith on BA and Colin Kerr on London City Airport; Aubrey Thompson and Carl Needer about British Gas and the National Grid, David Gigg from G4S and Jim Edgar of GEOAmev, Stephen Ell about EDF and Jason Evans on Seven Trent, and the excellent Rob Walters and Jackie Staggs of Asda.

The General Secretary spent an hour with us answering a range of challenging questions, speaking from the heart and receiving an ovation from conference. Lisa Nandy, the Secretary of State for Energy & Climate, came and spoke our language, she gets the importance of having a mixed energy policy not just because of the little matter of keeping the lights on, our homes heated, and the economy running when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine, but because of the vital importance for our members' jobs, conditions, and communities.

We received a legal update from Union Line that left nobody in any doubt that social media in the workplace is a minefield and work and Facebook do not mix.

Among the many other highlights of conference we were joined by members from British Airways fighting the outsourcing of IT jobs and the offshoring of their work to India. We had a tremendous contribution from Liz Robinson, Nadia Iqbal, and Holly Ferguson, on the work of the British Gas Women's Group, and a passionate Paul Sony on equalities.

During the motions affecting the retail industry our members at Asda made a direct request to conference and one that I am repeating to full Congress this morning: do not shop with the robots. Ignore those irritating automated checkouts and always use manned tills wherever possible. *(Applause)*

Throughout the day we were reminded that our core business as a union is as wage brokers and organisations and we had some fantastic examples of that, including the outstanding achievement over Mitie at London City Airport where the company told us things were so tough this year all they could afford was to give our members a pay freeze. Well, one campaign and a successful industrial action ballot later, the company caved in and our members won a whopping 10.2% pay increase. *(Applause)* It gets better, backdated until April last year and a 30% increase in GMB membership. *(Applause)*

Conference condemned the owners of Northumbrian Water for ransacking the workers' pension fund in order to maximise profits.

We debated safety concerns amongst security officers turning up for work when ill for fear of repercussions due to zero-hours contracts and poor terms and conditions. Neither the president nor I missed the fact that the motion which generated the most visits to the rostrum by a country mile was on the stress and mental health of security officers, but quickly opened into a much wider debate on how GMB reps across the section could support members with stress and mental health issues.

The Section's Dave Lyons Award for the most outstanding activist was won by Keith Dixon (*Applause*) and the very first President's Award for Learning and Development was won by Mark Church without a dry eye in the house after his acceptance speech.

We had motions covering the Fair Play campaign, £10 now for the entertainment industry and proper regulation of qualified veterinary nurses. Then there was the almost unbelievable treatment of the workforce reported at the distribution site of online retailer ASOS, where amongst the catalogue of atrocities and abuses against its employees, staff are forced to urinate in the water fountains to avoid being disciplined for taking a toilet break.

Congress, this Union has a proud tradition of taking on bullies and it is about time we knocked over a couple of these distribution companies and taught their managers there some manners. (*Applause*) I am announcing today that National Office will mobilise an air war to support the ground war being waged by our Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region and with the intention of making these ASOS famous, bringing some dignity and respect back to the workplace. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Justin. Will the movers of the resolutions that I called before Justin spoke, and seconders, please come to the front. The winners of the Prize Draw, the GMB Credit Union, in first place Claire Hargreaves of the North West & Irish Region, £150, the second place Debbie Colucci of Wales & South West Region, £100, and Neil Collinson of Northern Region, £75. Well done. The movers of 159, please?

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC OWNERSHIP &
CONTROL
WATER COMPANIES
MOTION 159**

159. WATER COMPANIES

This Conference notes the appalling behaviour of some Water Company Executives in reducing pension benefits of workers and future pensioners at the same time as offshoring profits and boosting their own remuneration on the backs of the workforce. Congress notes the spin operation that these Companies engage in with widespread public relations resources spent which could be put to much better use such as helping safeguard workers' future benefits. Congress believes that it is an absolute scandal that the taxpayer and the workforce are being continually ripped off by corporate bureaucrats who have little entrepreneurial expertise or feel for local communities. Congress believes that a product that is free from the air should be owned and managed for UK people to UK standards, not used as a cash cow for foreign shareholders or quilted corporate executives.

N40 NORTHUMBRIAN WATER BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. RAMSEY (Northern): Congress, in our region Northumbrian Water is the major water company covering the North East of England. The company is owned by CK Industries, which is a Hong Kong based Chinese company. In 2011, CKI completed a cash purchase of Northumbrian Water which resulted in senior

executives receiving gold-plated pensions and benefits. Northumbrian Water have a very active public relations propaganda machine whilst maintaining close links to the Labour Party, which has existed for decades.

Congress, now Northumbrian Water is owned by CKI, CKI have siphoned off hundreds of billions of pounds offshore in tax avoidance and it is well out of reach of the HMRC. Current top executives of Northumbrian Water have had their pay and bonuses directly linked to future pension benefits from our members and still receive bonuses on future savings to the company pension scheme. It is disgraceful.

What GMB members have had to put up with over the last year in the Northern Region has been an absolute disgrace. Our members took industrial action over attacks on our pensions and the company put a little bit of money back into the pot. However, on average it was a reduction of 25% on everybody's defined benefit pension scheme. The effect of this was poor morale. During the action there was intimidation by managers, bullying by other managers, basically turning worker against worker. Non-union members received enhanced payments in an attempt to break the action. We stood strong for four months. We got a bit back and we were proud to stand. (*Applause*) Thank you.

Congress, water is an essential utility. It is simply wrong to exploit workers and the taxpayer in order to feed the greed of owners and face the shareholders who have no affinity with our communities. Labour should say it is going to nationalise the water industry. It is as simple as that. This will impact positively on workers, consumers, and taxpayers. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. E. STOBART (Northern): Congress, as the mover of the motion has already said, NWL's recent behaviour during the pensions dispute was quite disgraceful. They put pressure on our members to come to work, they cut the benefits of the current workforce, and the finance director got a big fat bonus for doing all of this. CKI then recycled money offshore back to China; yet another example of China dumping on us.

Congress, key industries and key services are being given away. Labour took the NWL shilling for years, and still does, and our members are very aware of their intent in this policy region. We would, however, like to place on record that during the dispute MPs, Pat Glass and Grahame Morris, have stood side by side with us in the cold and the rain outside NWL premises with our members trying to fight these changes.

In closing, Congress, I want to save my remarks for NWL management. They have no vision, they are a monopoly, and they are taking advantage of a product we take for granted. It should be put back into public ownership and returned back to those who should have a share in its future, us the people, and we need to do this before they come back for the rest of our members' pension. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, for those who were not around in those days, this Union led the biggest campaign of its life on water, gas, and electricity. We beat Thatcher twice but in the end she went to the law to make sure that she was not beaten. She could not do it the fair way so she went the other way. Water should be back in-house, not for profit but owned by the people of this country. *(Applause)*
Motion 160, London.

RAIL NATIONALISATION IN THE UK MOTION 160

160. RAIL NATIONALISATION IN THE UK

This Conference calls on the Central Executive Council to financially support and become actively involved in efforts to renationalise the passenger and freight rail system in the UK through Action for Rail or other similar campaigns.

GMB UNITE BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): First time speaker this morning. *(Applause)* President, Congress, I am moving this Motion 160. It is quite incredible the way the system has worked since we have been around. Over the last 20 years of privatisation single fares have increased by over 200% - can you imagine a pound now costs us £201 – while the season ticket price rises have increased between 55 and 80%.

Let us go back to a simpler time when the rails were not privatised. Let us remind ourselves of how we were not being robbed by the big businesses for a service we should all be able to use at a fair rate. The train companies may claim that these fare increases are going towards the improvement of the service but not even that is true. The latest relevant data shows the train companies gain an average return of almost 150% on every pound they put into their business.

I feel it is time we bring back our rails and tracks where they belong in our hands and not for the profit of the sharks. This is but one of the fronts we must fight as the Tory Government continues selling off our national industries to their friends. I call on the CEC to support the efforts for the re-nationalisation of the railways. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mo. Secunder.

BRO. A. COPSEY (London): First time delegate, second time speaker. *(Applause)*
Like many seconders who come up here we only have two minutes so we trawl through the internet and we try and get our facts and figures and try to add something a little different to what we believe is going to be moved. Obviously, we are well aware that in 1993 they were privatised. We were told that the subsidies would reduce. Well, all these years later the subsidies have not and they are now rising to, I believe, about £10bn. I am not going to talk here about facts and figures because they are all clear to see and they are in the public domain.

All I really want to add is this. Going back to British Rail, as I see it, there have been new inventions since we have been privatised and I have never seen these in British

Rail but what I have seen since privatisation is that I believe they now have a new type of snow, a new type of rain, and new types of leaves. Now, we never had these before so I do not know if these are any good or not. I am not a rail user myself so I do not share the problems perhaps that many rail users do. I just travel now and again on the Tube. To me, once in a couple of months is very good but I do see the overcrowding, I do see the overpricing, and obviously things can get a lot better. I ask Congress to support this motion. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Andrew, are you from Islington Branch? No? Okay. Thank you. Wrong one! Does anyone else wish to come in on this debate?

BRO. C. RONEY (London): President, Congress, brothers and sisters, first time speaker, first time delegate. (*Applause*) Thank you very much for that. I would like to speak about Motion 159 which is the water companies. I have worked for 37 years in the water companies. I too stood alongside Mary `and many, many other colleagues, to fight Thatcher, to stop it being privatised. Okay, we lost. The fight has to come back. We have to get back to this. In many, many cases pensioners are actually paying additional amounts of money on their water bills. I do not know where it is going. We need to let the public know where that money is going. Only 17% of your water bill in this country, on average, actually goes to the employees and the guys who are working there, and they are working hard. In many cases the pensions have been slashed and decimated. I myself find that possibly in the last 10 years of working am now paying double what I used to pay into my pension just to stay on course for when I retire. Every time off work slap a great big fine on a water company, but guess who is paying for it, we are paying for it. They slash our T&Cs, they are ruining our pensions, please, please, please, Congress, get behind us in the fight to renationalise the water industries. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Next one. Don't you dare tell me this is your first time, fifth time, sixth time!

A DELEGATE: Two points very, very quickly. One, on the first motion, let us renationalise the water, and let's have a national water grid so we do not have situations where one part of the country is having problems getting water. Secondly, on British Rail, we need to force these people if they are still private in British Rail to invest in actually making more railways. Sorry to make this regional but in the South East we have problems from Brighton. There is a railway line between Lewis and Uckfield which is in disuse, it should be opened up. It is another way of getting the railways back on, with more jobs and more infrastructure. That is what we need. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Anyone else? I call Jim Clarke to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. J. CLARKE (CEC, Public Services): We are supporting Motion 160 on rail privatisation with a qualification. This motion rightly asks the GMB to support renationalisation of the rail industry, both for passenger and for freight. This is a longstanding policy of Congress and unenforceable. However, the qualification is that the GMB, as in all instances, would need to assess the merits of a named and any other campaign groups before committing to offer any financial support to them. This

qualification is in line with GMB policy for all applications for financial support and resources outside our own campaigns. It is important to maintain this practice as we must be consistent to ensure that we are supporting campaigns which carry out actions in line with our aims and our policies. Therefore, Congress, please support Motion 160 with this qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Does London Region accept the qualification? Yes? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put 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.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on, I will be calling Social Policy, 287, 289, 292, 294, and 295. Will the movers and seconders please come to the front? The York Disabled Workers Co-Op raffle has now been drawn so pick up your prizes from the stall, please. Thank you.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT BICYCLE RIDER SAFETY MOTION 287

287. BICYCLE RIDER SAFETY

Congress calls for enforcement of Road Traffic laws and the Highway code to help reduce road traffic accidents on cycle riders.

Cycling continues to increase as a health resource and as a cheap viable mode of transport and its time that Road Traffic Acts are brought up-to-date to represent this.

Cycle helmets must become mandatory and enforceable as does light coloured clothing with reflective accessories in the dark as Rule 59 suggests in the Highway Code.

Highway Code Rule 61 says riders must use cycle routes, advanced stop lines providing it's safe to do so but this is not compulsory in the Highway Code. We believe that this safety advice must become mandatory.

Highway Code Rule 66 says, you should never ride more than two abreast on narrow or busy roads and not close behind another vehicle. The GMB demands that this regulation is now enforced correctly as other rules are in the Highway Code.

Highway Code Rule 69 says you must obey all traffic signs and traffic light signals. To help enforce these rules and regulations we the Professional Drivers Branch suggest the carrying of I.D. whilst riding must become law to aid the police. We further suggest that if a cyclist has a full or provisional driving licence this form of I.D. should be the minimum carried, and in the event of prosecution, points should be added to that licence as is the case with motoring offences.

Congress agrees to lobby Parliament, to bring into law these changes to the Road Traffic Act and the Highway Code.

(Carried)

BRO. G. BOLISTER (London): Congress, cycling in London has become more and more popular for a reliable cheap source of transport over the past few years. The Highway Code we feel needs to be updated as a matter of urgency. We call for an enforcement of all road and traffic laws, to be enforced regarding cycle helmets whilst riding on major roads within the capital, and surrounding areas. We also call for enforcement of reflective clothing whilst riding on major roads. This should be made law and incorporated within the Highway Code.

Since 2015, there have been eight fatalities within London alone; seven of the fatalities have been involved with HGV lorries, which concerns us when the HGV speed limit has been increased in 2015 from 40mph to 50mph on a single dual carriageway. Also, drivers driving a 7.5 ton will increase from 50mph to 60mph. In Scotland the requirements are to stay the same. If you look at London alone, it is a big enough city. These speed changes are downright ludicrous with the amount of people using bikes on these roads, and I am sure you agree. Also, there seems to be issues around cyclists stopping at junctions, major junctions, lights, zebra crossings, and so on. This needs to become mandatory, if law, to be put into place. There has to be some sort of a fine.

We have to save the best till last. The Highway Code clearly states on Rule 66 never to ride more than two abreast on narrow or busy roads. If you cast your minds back to 2015, our beloved Boris Johnson was caught giving his wife a backie whilst riding on a busy major road. Now, this offence alone carries £250. Was the previous mayor fined? I don't think so. We are talking about someone who is thick in it with the Prime Minister, Dodgy Dave. Congress, I ask for the backing of this motion to help put pressure where it is needed and to regulate laws that have already been put into place, no matter what your profession. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Gary, stay there a minute. I have been asked by the London Region and your branch to give you a Cycling Proficiency Badge. *(Laughter)* I think they have done better than that. I don't know whether this is their way of saying, "Get on your bike." They would like to give you the Oscar for the times you have been up there this week. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. BOLISTER: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder.

BRO. A. LAW (London): Figures issued in November 2015 by RSPA on cycle accidents: Killed - children 6, adults 107, total 113 deaths. Seriously injured - children, 273, adults 3,090, total 3,401. Slightly injured - children, 1,726, adults 15,684, a total of 17,773. That is over 21,287 incidents. They are the ones that have been reported. Did you know 75% of fatal or serious cyclist accidents occur in urban areas? Did you know that 80% of cyclists are male? Did you know that almost a quarter of the cyclists killed or injured are children?

Rule 59 of the Highway Code says that you should wear a cycle helmet and that this must conform to the current regulations, be a correct size, and securely fastened. Way back in 2011, when my wife and I visited Australia, cycle helmets were already compulsory and had been for quite a while. It would cause less injuries and less pressure on the NHS. Do not assume the vehicle is going straight ahead just because the driver has not signalled left. Always avoid undertaking vehicles in this situation. It is better to hang back rather than be knocked off. Be safe. Be seen. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now ask for the mover and seconder of 289, Northern, please.

REGIONAL AIRPORTS MOTION 289

289. REGIONAL AIRPORTS

This Conference calls on Westminster to consider investment in regional hubs as a way forward for the UK economy, as part of regenerating the UK economy and not just focus on the merits or otherwise around Heathrow. Congress notes that with recent decisions made in devolved administrations and on-going debate around Heathrow, that regions are missing out on vital investment opportunities for areas that are well served by existing regional airport networks.

Z46 STOCKTON NO.3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. SPEAKMAN (Northern): Congress, let me say at the offset that I appreciate there is currently a regional hub network within the UK's air capacity. We also know there are passenger and freight airports within the UK. However, the debate, like everything else, has become centred on London and the South East, even Jeremy Corbyn says too much money has been sucked down there. In a key sense that is understandable with the population focused in the south. However, Congress, the debate on the UK's future has been about a third runway and it seems everything has stopped for that debate to continue. Forget the bribe of using British steel and construction at Heathrow, it has taken at least 25 years so far with no sign of an end as politicians place their parliamentary seats ahead of what is right for the UK.

Congress, we have a major debate taking place on the devolution within England at the moment. I recognise that in part of the country devolution is going ahead at some pace. In the Northern Region we have three devolution deals linked to a mayor, each having their own airport within them. I think the devolution deals, particularly in the North East combined authority area, are designed to kill labour in the heartland. It is Osborne's call and it is being driven by unelected officials at national and local level. In our region there is a compelling case for development at Teesside Airport to be based on it being a key freight hub as potentially that will make the case for vital transport works to take place to take the pressure off the Teesside road network by improvements to ring roads and the A66 and the A67.

Congress, the debate nationally is holding back local development. National government must give some certainty to passengers, businesses, and workers so that we can get on with planning a future that works. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. While the seconder is coming up, I have just had a note from the RMA stall, will those who have won the raffle please go because they are going to close at 10.30. You have two seconds, so get on your bike out there and get them. (*The motion was formally seconded*) Okay, 292, Northern.

THROUGH TICKETING ON BUS AND RAIL MOTION 292

292. THROUGH TICKETING ON BUS AND RAIL

This Conference calls on Government and Regulators to work to bring in a system whereby tickets can be utilised on the UK's bus and rail network, so that passengers do not have to endure the farce of separate ticketing. Congress believes that the fragmented nature of the UK transport industry requires a rethink as to how workers and passengers can obtain a much better deal and thereby reduce costs of travel.

Z46 STOCKTON NO.3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. CLEGG (Northern): Congress, in November last year the so-called government regional devolution proposals were shown up for what they really are. The local authorities in the North East combined area wanted to bring quality contracts and do it all in-house. It was designed to stop bus operators from profiting from captive markets at the expense of the passengers. More than that, Congress, it was to take a lead from the public transport in London and have more integrated facilities for workers and for the passengers. The Oyster Card approach was going to be adopted, through ticketing on bus and rail was on the cards. At the same time, terms and conditions were to be preserved for the public sector. To be honest, it was a radical idea with local politicians getting on with supporting the Tyne and Wear passenger transport network for the future and extended even further. Unfortunately, after heavy lobbying from the bus companies, the Government's so-called independent traffic commissioner knocked back the efforts and the proposals. Congress, it just goes to show where the loyalties for the Tories really rest. It is not with the passengers, it is not with the workers, but it is with their donor friends.

The quality contract proposal in the North East goes some way to achieving regional control of part of the public transport in the public sector. What this has shown, though, is that our GMB policy of full nationalisation and the single operator across all the public transport has now become more than just an ambition, we need to work with those friends in Westminster who will make this a reality. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David. Secunder. Formally. Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 294, Wales & South West.

CHANGES TO THE DISABLED BLUE BADGE APPLICATION MOTION 294

294. CHANGES TO THE DISABLED BLUE BADGE APPLICATION

This Conference notes that changes to the application conditions are proving to be discriminatory and indeed excluding working disabled people who are endeavouring to work and not be reliant on the State for benefits. Congress, there is an automatic renewal of the blue badge application if the person is in receipt of State benefits. Nevertheless, not all disabled people are claiming benefits. The new criteria excludes GP's/hospital consultants recommendations and reports which is ludicrous. Nevertheless, the assessor will take into consideration copies of health appointment letters in the same year that the renewal is due etc. The new process is a tick box exercise within the Local Authority which is usually undertaken by an able bodied person who is not a qualified health adviser. The decision is solely through the tick box exercise and the person carrying out the tick box exercise.

There is no appeal process, however, if the application is turned down the disabled person can request that it be looked at again. However, it is evident that the decision will remain the same as the original person conducting the tick box exercise is also the person that will look at the application again and has already made the decision. I understand that some disabled people have tried to enlist the support of their local AM's and PM's but were told that the final decision is with the assessor.

Conference calls upon the CEC to pursue a campaign aimed at ensuring fairness and equity in all aspects of the application scheme relating to the provision of a Blue Badge.

ASDA JOINT BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. MARCARIAN (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, as you can see from this motion, the changes to the disabled blue badge application are proving to be unfair and, indeed, excluding working disabled people who are endeavouring to work and not be reliant on the state for benefits. Congress, there is an automatic renewal of the blue badge application if the person is in receipt of state benefits. Nevertheless, not all disabled people are claiming benefits. The new criteria exclude GP and hospital consultants' recommendations and reports, which is ludicrous. Nevertheless, the assessor will take into consideration copies of health appointment letters in the same year that the renewal is due, etc.

The new process is a tick box exercise within the local authority, which is usually undertaken by an able-bodied person who is not a qualified health adviser, which is astounding. The decision is solely through this process and the person carrying out the tick box exercise makes the final decision. There is no appeal process. However, if the application is turned down, the disabled person can request that it be looked at again. It is evident that the decision will remain the same and the original person conducting this is also the person that will look at the application again and has already made the decision.

I understand that some disabled people have tried to enlist the support of their local AMs and PMs but were told that the final decision is with the assessor. Congress, please support this motion to ensure that disabled people can access the same rights regardless if they work or not. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. D. ISMAY (GMB Wales & South West): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, the principle of the blue badge scheme is to allow those people with restricted mobility to live independently. You may think that every effort would be to ensure that disabled people can integrate effectively to normal everyday life. There are far too many decisions made to deny them that basic right. As Sandra has already said, the tougher assessment criteria were introduced, mainly to tighten up badge access as part of a crackdown on high levels of fraudulent use. In many cases, given the surging numbers subject to a mobility assessment, under pressure local authorities staff have taken up to 12 weeks to process the applications. This delay can also apply to those applicants who are looking to renew their badges.

None of us would condone abuse of the scheme whereby non-disabled people try to benefit from the preferential parking arrangements. The fact is, however, that those genuine claimants who rely on the blue badge to enable them to access facilities, such as shops, medical appointments, and leisure opportunities, both locally and further afield, have been seriously disadvantaged. Some of the assessors hardly know the meaning of the word “disability” and the applicant can often discover the application experience to be both humiliating and degrading.

Colleagues, there is another negative side to this story, too, where some councils are now considering whether to charge £10 for the issue renewal and replacement of the badge whereas previously they were issued for free, due of course to big cuts to their budgets. Also, blue badge holders are being required to pay the same amount for parking in council-owned bays as other users, again to raise extra revenue to support a flagging budget. I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. Motion 295?

TEMPORARY DISABILITY MOTION 295

295. TEMPORARY DISABILITY

This conference proposes that wherever there is blue badge parking for disabled people that a similar scheme could be put in place for people who have a temporary disability and require to park closer to the venue of the choice.

G38 SURREY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. T. HOOD (Southern): Congress, sometimes it is not until something happens to yourself that you notice the plight of others. Last November I fell down my stairs at home and I broke my back. After a few days in hospital, I was sent home with a metal back brace and crutches, and an awful lot of painkillers. When I asked the hospital consultant when would I be able to drive because I still had a life and I still had to get on with things, he said he would be happy for me to drive when I could do an emergency stop. It took me a couple of weeks to be able to achieve this. Although

I could not return to work I still wanted to be able to do the shopping and have to go to hospital appointments and the GP for prescriptions.

It was on one of my shopping trips that I took notice of the car parking. I found I could not get very close to the shop. The walk across the car park plus the walking around the shop was really knacker. I would have to rest. I started counting disabled blue badge holder spaces and although one or two of them were being used, most were empty. I then started to notice how many people were at the outpatients clinics at the hospital. After speaking to some of the people I found like me they could drive but needed to park nearer to where they wanted to go. Congress, all I am asking is could GPs and hospital consultants give out a temporary blue badge which is then handed back when the person is fit and well again. I move. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tina. Secunder.

SIS. E. HEASMAN (Southern): First time delegate, seconding 295. *(Applause)* President, Congress, unaccustomed as I am to this public speaking malarkey now I will try to say a few words. To me this motion is simply common sense. I will tell you what I have seen around two weeks ago. I am on my bus waiting to go home. The bus is in the bus lane, no other parking allowed. A car pulls up in front of the bus and my driver has a go at the car driver despite him taking a zimmer frame from his boot. This car is a taxi. The driver is trying to explain that his passenger is disabled. The bus driver meanwhile has taken photos of the number plate, the bus driver is fuming by now, arguing with the taxi driver, and he tells the taxi driver he is reporting him to the council. I am just sitting quietly saying nothing.

As I am on my way home I have a pop at the bus driver. He tells me to mind my own business. Well, big mistake. He doesn't know me! I needed a taxi later in the week so I went to the same company involved and I asked to speak to the driver 155 as I had noticed his licence plate. He had been reported to the council, as the guy had said, so I called the council there and then. I explain and I go on about disabled rights, etc., and we are assured that the complaint is quashed.

Now, this taxi driver is a young man with a young family trying to do his job. This is his livelihood and he cannot afford to lose this job so I am happy, he is happy. My job is done. Not quite. I reported my bus driver as it is a local company I use and know. They tell me that the driver concerned denies all so I just suggest we look at the camera footage in court as all our buses have cameras inside and out. Problem solved.

So we do need short-term cards to allow for quick drop-offs at our stations, doctors, hospitals, anywhere people need to go to keep the driver safe, the disabled, elderly, and the temporary infirm are not disrespected. Please support this motion.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call the gentleman who wishes to speak against. I just called you a gentleman.

BRO. D. TUCKWELL (Southern): Speaking against Motion 287. With cities becoming more congested with the attendant strain on public transport and the increase in pollution that results, encouraging cycling is a vital change to our transport strategy and improving our health. There are many objections to mandatory helmet laws. They do not improve injury rates, discourage regular recreational exercise in an era of high obesity, and are an unnecessary and unjust intrusion into individual freedom.

While there is evidence that wearing a helmet will provide some protection for a knock to the head, the benefit is small. Severe head injuries amongst cyclists are not particularly common and helmets do not prevent all or even a high proportion of those that may occur. Helmet laws in Australia drastically reduced the number of cyclists on the road leading to increased risks amongst those who remained through reduced safety in numbers. Research acknowledged the influence on cyclists' accidents and injury rates and when the laws were introduced in Australia in the 1990s cycling trips reduced by up to 40%.

Given they reduced cycling numbers so dramatically, the introduction of such a law would create a net health and financial burden on the community at large, and the health service. The British Heart Foundation has shown that lack of physical activity causes tens of thousands of premature deaths which swamps the 100 to 120 cycling deaths. Pedestrian and car occupants are each responsible for many more possible admissions but nobody suggests they wear a helmet.

Carrying ID would be an unnecessary intrusion on individual freedom. To conclude, this motion is unnecessary and has unintended consequences. The imposition of further unnecessary regulation would have a chilling effect on cycling and be detrimental to the health, economy, and liveability in this country. Please do not support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. London, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Kevin Buchanan. We will have to hang on. Come on, Kevin.

BRO. K. BUCHANNAN (CEC, Commercial Services): Thank you, President. We are supporting Motion 287, 289, and 292 with qualifications. On Motion 287, on cycle rider safety, the GMB fully supports the importance of safe roads and supports improvements in safety for all those who use the roads, including cyclists, pedestrians, as well as those in vehicles. The qualification is that there are some demands in the motion which would be simply too difficult to enforce as they currently stand. Drivers, for instance, are not required to carry ID at all times, nor are pedestrians. Therefore, it would be unfair for cyclists to be required to carry ID. There are also a number of cycle routes which share space with bus lanes or have other vehicles parked in, at which times require cyclists to cycle outside of designated routes for safety reasons. To make this mandatory for cyclists, cycle routes would have to be completely unimpeded for their use and, finally, police do enforce regulations against cyclists.

On Motion 289, I am grateful to the mover for clarifying the objective of the motion but I will clarify the CEC's position on Motion 289. On the investment and expansion of regional airports, the motion specifically refers to investment in regional

hubs and not narrowly focused on Heathrow. However, there are two types of hubs in the UK, passenger and freight. Our qualification is that there are a number of regional airports which do operate as freight hubs. The motion implies that there is not a regional airport hub network.

On Motion 292, having a fair and simple ticketing system for public transport, it is an ideal which we should support. Nationalising such services could go a long way to achieve that. The qualification is that this could only be pursued after full nationalisation and a single operator across all public transport.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 287, 289, and 292 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. I understand there are two delegates down there wishing to come up. Am I correct? Yes? Come on, then.

BRO. T. DONEGAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I live in Aberdeen, oil capital of Europe, if you believe that! Down there our airport is like a shed when you look at some of these places. We have to get a wee bit of investment. We will probably end up with something nobody wants. When coming down here I could not get a flight from Aberdeen. I had to fly to Edinburgh and then down to here. If I want to go to Manchester I can get a flight there as long as I am a businessman, so I can afford it; instead, I have to take a train. We are treated as second class citizens up there. The region needs investment. People cannot fly from there if they want to go on holiday unless they want to go to two different places on a Sunday. When we see cheap flights, £44, great, we will do that and go to Palma. Yes, if we can get to Manchester first to get the flights. We live in a different world up there. We need some investment. We need you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I am assuming your region is GMB Scotland! Anyone else down there?

SIS. K. EVANS (GMB Wales & South West): Thank you for letting me speak. First time delegate, first time speaking. (*Applause*) I am a regular bike rider and I am despised equally by the car drivers when I am on the road and the pedestrians who share the cycle path with me. I am afraid I want to oppose this motion for the simple reason that I want to know who is going to be responsible for saying whether those cycle paths are actually safe to ride on, if we make it mandatory that you do ride on those cycle paths.

For instance, I live in North Wales, it is a beautiful part of the world, and we have a few cycle paths, not many because most people go off road to cycle, but on those cycle paths you have debris that is very slippery for slick tyres, you risk being decapitated by overhanging branches on the cycle paths, and you get punctures from the farmers who are cutting the hedges and leaving hawthorns, leaving you stranded in the middle of nowhere. Basically, we have cycle paths that are just plonked in the middle of nowhere and you cannot get on them or off them safely. I am afraid I cannot support something that would make me use something dangerous to me. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Would the mover from London Region wish to have the right to reply? No? Okay. Thank you. I am now putting 287, with the qualification, does London accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Yes. Okay. On 289, does Northern accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) And 292? (*Agreed*) Okay. I will put them all to the vote, 287, 289, 292 – 287, all those in favour please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 287 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: 289, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 289 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: 292, all those in favour please show. Those against? That is carried.

Motion 292 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: 294, all those in favour please show. Against? That is carried.

Motion 294 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: 295, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? Carried.

Motion 295 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. I now ask Helen Johnson to move Committee Report No. 6.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.6

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Withdrawn Motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 189, Diluting the Freedom of Information Act, standing in the name of London Region.

Bucket collections: the amount collected for the bucket collection held at the end of Wednesday morning's session, organised by North West & Irish Region for the Belfast Children's Hospice, raised £614.59. (*Applause*) The amount collected for the bucket collection at the end of the Wednesday afternoon session, organised by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, was £422. (*Applause*) President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.6.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen, and Barry, and the Standing Orders team who have been upstairs all the week looking down at you. Thanks, Helen. Do you accept the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Standing Orders Committee Report No.6 was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, Tim, in true tradition the two charities, £614 for North West & Irish Region, I think we should double it, don't you?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: If you say so, President. That will do for me.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't need to ask about this one, and the Yorkshire one? (*Cheers*) Okay. All right, colleagues. Thank you, Tim. Thank you all this week for your real generosity. Thank you. The next item is the Congress Local Gift. After that I will be calling 229, 231, and 232. First, Congress, the Congress Local Gift of £2,000 this year has been chosen by London Region and will be divided between Stoke Newington Drop in Centre for the Homeless and University College Hospital Pathway Homeless Team, both charities offer support to the homeless. I call on Evelyn Martin and Vaughan West to say a few words.

BRO. V. WEST (London): Thank you, Mary. President, Congress, in the absence of our Regional President, Roy Dunnett, Vaughan West for one week only acting President of London Region. I am delighted to accept the Local Gift on behalf of the region and send Roy our best wishes. Having sat here over a number of years, I have watched and learned some tricks from the sadly missed President of Northern Region, Billy Hughes. So just in case and as a tribute to Billy, rather than my pocket handkerchief my hat is going over the light! (*Applause*)

Congress, the local gift this year was inspired by our very own Evelyn Martin, until recently a longstanding member of the CEC and still a member of our regional committee. Evelyn has worked tirelessly for years on a voluntary basis with the homeless in London. I am sure many of you on the CEC and certainly those of us on our regional committee have been approached by Evelyn for our old clothes. If you ever wondered what she did with them, today I am going to tell you.

Evelyn's church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Stoke Newington, North London, runs a weekly drop in centre in their church hall every Wednesday lunchtime for the homeless in the area. Since funding from Hackney Council was cut, the centre relies now entirely on donations of money, food, and clothes, from their own congregation. You can see from some of the slides we are showing you, hopefully – no, we are not – one of the slides we were hoping to show you was a list of foodstuffs that they rely on every week by donation from the congregation.

The drop-in serves a hot meal and if they need it warm clothing to the homeless every Wednesday lunchtime. Dean Gilligan and I had the privilege of meeting the volunteers led by the church elder Lascelles, the head chef, Sister Reed, and Bob, their volunteer welcomer and greeter. They have a regular client base of about 60 or 70 homeless who attend every week and we were hoping to show you a slide of some of their volunteers with the users at the centre a couple of Wednesdays ago. The centre has now been running for about 15 years and London Region are pleased we will be able to keep it going for a while longer yet.

The second half of our gift this year goes to Pathway, a University College Hospital in Camden. Pathway was founded in 2009/10 to provide support for homeless patients. Homeless patients are more likely to have both physical and mental health problems. They are more likely to have substance misuse issues and more likely to suffer from

blood borne viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis and TB. London has seen a 30% increase in people living on the street and this is only identified by those who are visible. The increase does not cover those hidden homeless, people living on their friends' couch, in a garden shed, or a disused garage, or even worse, going into prostitution just to find bed and shelter.

Pathway was established by Prof. Aidan Halligan, who sadly passed away last year, and Dr. Nigel Hewitt, together with Nurse Trudy Boyce, to offer a model of care to the homeless, to break the cycle of the hospital patching them up only to discharge them back on the street. Pathway works on a multiagency basis across the medical services, both GPs and hospitals, social services, housing services, and the police to break the cycle of homelessness for patients in the King's Cross and Euston area of London.

Again, Dean and I had the pleasure of attending a recent board meeting to meet some of the staff from all those agencies and one of their clients, Barry, whose birthday it was on the day we went, and Barry's dog. Barry is one example of the success of breaking that cycle of having been to hospital only to be discharged back on the street. He has now been found housing, and still receives ongoing support to prevent him going back on the street. The team attempt to ensure that when a homeless patient is discharged the agencies are in place and ready to get them housing, the benefits they are entitled to, and the support they need. This includes funding extra nights in a respite unit in the area, so they do not have to go back on the street before more permanent solutions can be found.

From these small beginnings in Camden the work has now been replicated across NHS Trusts not only in London but across the UK. Your donation will go towards training professionals, funding research, employing more care navigators, and providing respite as well as practical support for the homeless. Last year over 3,000 homeless patients were assisted by Pathway across the UK.

Congress, on behalf of London Region, Stoke Newington Seventh Day Adventist Church, Pathway, and Evelyn, can I thank you for your generosity and allowing us to split our donation between these two projects this year. Homelessness is an ever-growing crisis in this country and projects like these on the front line will stop it becoming even worse. I thank you again, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Vaughan. Evelyn, do you want to say a word?

SIS. E. MARTIN: As a child growing up one night as we went to bed with my two brothers lying on the floor, and my two sisters just beside me on the floor, my Mum said, "If you have a few pennies in Jamaica you don't buy a bed, survival is the name of the game." So we had to sleep on the floor. However, my mother was crying. I said, "Mama, what's wrong?" She said, "The wind was so strong today the dust get in my eyes and it really hurts." That was the end of the matter. The following morning I heard her telling a neighbour, "I never slept last night. I nearly died in my heart. I cannot tell those children I don't have any money to give them food today." I thought, "Oh, so that's why she was crying. No dust was in her eyes." I make a pledge to my Mum as a child, and I don't even understand what I was saying, "Mum,

when I grow up I will go to school and I'll get some money and look after you and I'll look after the poor people." (*Applause*) Thank you.

Little did I know but I came to England and here I am today, thank God. Through the union everyone has helped me so great, the University College and what I do. We have the donation of some really good clothes that people throw away and as time is on us I will be quick. I go and I get the clothes. They throw them away sometimes, but they say, "You can't give to people because they need a little tidying up," so I wash them, and help them and things, and the hospital come and take them and give to those people. This is what happens through the GMB and I thank you ever so much and all the disappointment, the bad name that they give unions, and all that, what I say, turn the other page, and you can run the union down as much as you can, but you tell them that Evelyn Martin is out there and that the union don't work: it works. Thank you ever so much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, this lady is worth her weight in gold. (*Standing ovation*) She comes, she collects everything; she does Saturday nights on the streets to make sure the homeless are found. Evelyn, I have been proud to know you for a long time. I am proud to know you today and proud this union has recognised how valuable you are to help those who have not been able to help themselves. Thank you, darling. On behalf of Congress, I am giving you this as an IOU. The cheque is not here because regions will send their money to Head Office and London Region will present you with the cheque. Okay. If you don't get it, let me know.

SIS. E. MARTIN: I will send you a card from Riviera!

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask the mover of Motion 229. London to move.

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL
DISABLED TOILETS
MOTION 229**

229. DISABLED TOILETS

Congress agrees the GMB should take action to put pressure on public and private sector organisations plus local and national government to put into place a national specification for all disabled toilets.

The present rules allow the minimum specification which is unsuitable for the majority of disabled people.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. LAW (London): Congress, I move Motion 229: Disabled Toilets. When we need to use public facilities away from home, wouldn't it be nice to have our own bathroom at our fingertips, everything at hand, simply in the right place, and more so when you are disabled? You need to have the correct facilities for whatever task you need to deal with available to you when you need it.

How many of you know that a disabled person has to purchase a radar key? With a radar key you can access public toilets. Without it, you can't go to the toilet. I didn't

know that. Many disabled people didn't know that. Often no one is around to ask for access. No access, no dignity. Colleagues, I am so disappointed at the lack of standards regarding disabled toilets, so much so that I have trawled the internet for information. What I have found is a bit of a surprise. I have learnt that there is a British Standard number, which is BS8300, which sets out details of what a disabled toilet should consist of. Sadly, in many cases, there is a failure to comply with the British Standard, and in my opinion only the basics are in place for the provider.

I would also like to mention that our branch members have taken part in what we called a "Wheelchair rally". We found out a lot about the quality of disabled toilets and the attitudes of the owners of these establishments. Clearly, it indicated to me that they would rather not provide this service, with problems like chairs and tables in the way of toilet doors, making it very difficult for wheelchair users to gain access inside. Inside you will find a lack of shelving for the user of equipment, a lack of coat hangers, bearing in mind that some male users of the toilets should have gone to Specsavers. I would also like to point out the ambition that all of the requirements of British Standard 8300 are carried out by the year 2030. When I read that, at best, I thought it was a joke, and at worse it was a lack of understanding and care for the disabled people everywhere. I have travelled to most part of the country, and our attitude to public toilets, not just to disabled toilets but also to public toilets, are sometimes grim, to say the least. We want, simply, a much more responsible attitude to providers, a better local government approach to planning permissions and making sure that BS8300 is applied in all cases. We want nothing more, nothing less. I, therefore, urge Congress to support this motion and that the GMB has it on its agenda for the responsibilities. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. I call the seconder. (*The motion was formally moved from the floor*) I call the mover of Motion 231, Southern Region.

PENSIONERS MOTION 231

231. PENSIONERS

This Conference calls on the CEC to address the discrimination of pensioners. Car hire not available to pensioners over 65. Car hire companies will not insure. Holiday insurance goes up by cost 50%. Why is this?

Z39 NORTH KENT ENGINEERING BRANCH
Southern Region

(*Referred*)

BRO. D. LEAK (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 231: Pensioners. I am a member of North Kent Engineering Branch. My branch secretary is a well-known veteran of the GMB. This motion was put forward as a direct result of personal experience. Last year, whilst Mick Laws was on holiday with his wife in Cornwall, his car broke down. It was towed to a local garage where he was told it would take three days to repair. He decided, whilst his car was in the garage, that he would hire a car in order to continue with his plans. This is when he found a problem, At 75 years old, no hire company could allow him to hire a car, because their insurance companies put an upper age limit of 65 on people wanting to hire cars. This ruined his holiday. So why is there this form of discrimination in 21st century Britain? This is not fair.

None of us want to be discriminated against like this when we are older. Please support Motion 231. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* I call Motion 232: Rise in Funeral Poverty. It is for London Region to move.

**RISE IN FUNERAL POVERTY
MOTION 232**

232. RISE IN FUNERAL POVERTY

This Conference agrees to lobby our MPs to stop the funeral poverty that this government has brought upon our society.

More than 100,000 people in the UK cannot afford to die.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. W. OSWICK (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 232. Congress recognises the rise in funeral poverty. This has been highlighted recently by the media with a Radio 2 show reporting concerns of widows owing thousands of pounds after funeral costs due to their partners dying without provisions of life insurance whilst still working or just retired. Never mind the cost-of-living crisis. The rise of funeral poverty in today's Britain means that there are more than 100,000 people who will be unable to afford the cost of dying.

With the cost of an average funeral around £3,700, and combined with the financial challenges faced by the poorest people in recession-hit Britain, we have seen funeral poverty rise by 50% over the last three years. Are we heading back to post-war Britain, where the elderly and vulnerable are starving themselves to try to provide for their own funeral? Our own forefathers formed secret workers' societies and associations providing for inadequate paid workers many years ago, with a friendly sick benefit and funeral money. Today, the GMB recognises the plight of today's lowly-paid workforce, but we can't afford these societies any more, but we can try to do something about it. We can make the nasty party look and listen. Their offer of a small and miserly £700 contribution benefit in the Funeral Payment Scheme applies only to those who fall within a benefit or tax-credit criteria. So what can we do? Not everyone is a member of our great union or can afford life insurance. Congress, I urge you, collectively, to lobby your local MPs to stop this funeral poverty by increasing the contributions the Government makes towards the funeral benefit, which will be to the benefit of the lowest-paid in the working class, who are also in need at this distressing time. I am proud that the CEC has decided to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

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

SIS. F. FRANKLYN (London): Congress, I second Motion 232 on Funeral Poverty. The wording of this motion is quite clear and quite true. More than 100,000 people in this country cannot afford to die. What a shameful statement! Funeral costs have

risen above the rate of inflation for several years. Funeral costs are not regulated and they are made up by the cost of crematoria fees, the cost of a cemetery burial plot and funeral-directors' fees. All of these fees vary dramatically by post code, and in the case of funeral director fees they vary even within the same post code.

The State Funeral Grant has been frozen at £700 for the last 13 years, despite the average basic funeral cost now being £3,702. Public Health Act funerals, or "paupers' funerals" have increased by 11% recently, and cost councils, on an average, £1,720 for each funeral. This increase is a direct result of the shameful cutting in social-fund grants. The increase in paupers' funerals is a disgrace, and they bring shame and sorrow on loving families at what is a very distressing time. A particularly harrowing recent story was of a poor mother who had to keep her dead son's body frozen for almost a year whilst she saved for his funeral.

Colleagues, it is time that the funeral industry was regulated and it is time that the value of the Death Grant be raised to a meaningful sum. Government policy is deliberate in making the working poor, the unemployed and disabled struggle to the point that their lives have no dignity. Now it seems that they are not content with that. Now it seems that the poor can have no dignity even in death. I am happy to second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Frances. Does anyone wish to oppose? (*No response*) I call Margaret Clarke to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. M. CLARKE (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 231 on Pensioners, which we are asking Congress to refer, and on Motion 229, which we are supporting with a qualification. Firstly, I will mention Motion 229 on Disabled Toilets. The motion is correct that there are set building regulations in line with the Disability Discrimination and Equality Acts, but it says that this minimum specification is not adequate. Whilst we support the branch wanting more than this minimum specification, the qualification is that, in the case of public buildings, if there are any dangers or issues found in using disabled toilets, there is normally a complaints procedure to report them, and this should be used, where possible.

Turning to Motion 231 — Pensioners — GMB has an existing policy on age discrimination in the workplace with Motion 47 carried at Congress 2008. We have a policy on raising awareness of age discrimination for older workers, with Motion 49 carried at Congress 2011. However, it appears that the motion is looking at a wider social policy issue — age discrimination once a person has retired. GMB is against all forms of unfair treatment and supports calls to outlaw age discrimination. We would support this motion and refer the motion to research this matter, and seek advice from the RMA. Please agree to support Motion 229 with this qualification, and agree to refer Motion 231. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition? (*No response*) London Region, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does Southern Region accept the reference back on Motion 231? (*Agreed*) I will put Motions 229 and 232. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. The region has accepted reference back on 231.

Motion 229 was CARRIED.

Motion 231 was REFERRED.

Motion 232 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me inform the Manufacturing Section delegates that Jude Brimble is not in the hall. Jude's father died this morning and Tim has sent Jude home, and quite rightly, too. We send her and the rest of her family our condolences from this Congress. Thank you.

RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION REPORT

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Jan Smith, National Secretary of the Retired Members Association, to report to Congress. Jan.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the National RMA in giving our report. I am a first-time speaker as your National Secretary, and first-time at this Conference as your National RMA Secretary. *(Applause)*

The past year has been a lively year. All our regions, within their reports, are doing very well, and are improving and getting everything together. They are doing all things, not only for pensioners, can I say, for yourselves. So taking into account yesterday's Composite 3, a lot of our members are accompanying reps, so we are not just dealing with pensioners' issues. We are also working for yourselves. I welcome that composite because the RMA is very close to my heart and it has been for many years.

Going on from that, can I say "Thank you" to Jerry Nelson. He has been a wonderful co-ordinator to us and guided us through and through. We wish you well, Jerry, on your operation and hope that everything goes well for you, as you so deserve. We will miss you, but good luck. *(Applause)* In thanking Jerry, we welcome Steve Kemp, who is our new National Co-ordinator. Steve, we look forward to working with you and hope that we will have the same working relationship as we have had with Jerry.

We would also like to thank Paul Kenny who, over the years, has supported us. He has always been at the forefront, and anything that we have wanted he has been there to support us. So, Tim, we also look forward to the same relationship with yourself. *(Applause)*

As to Monica, thank you, Monica, for all the hard work that you have done for the RMA. Monica was the national secretary for around 13/16 years. She is quite unsure as to how many years she has been in that position, but she has been there as long as I can remember and she has done a wonderful job on behalf of the RMA. *(Applause)*

Last year we held our conference in Manchester, and it was a successful conference. I can report that we will be holding a further conference this year, and it will be on 25th and 26th October. There has been a change of venue, and it will be at Wortley Hall in Sheffield. We also invite Mary, who, over the years, has chaired our meetings. So, Mary, we invite you, if you can this year, to come along and chair our meeting. We

also extend that invite to Tim, our General Secretary, to come and address our conference.

I'd like to say thank you to Roger and John, who have manned our stall throughout this week. They have done a wonderful job in selling the raffle tickets, and I would also like to thank the regions and everybody who donated the prizes.

Our week doesn't end today. We will be attending the Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool on Monday, so we have got another job to do. Can I remind the delegates who are here, again, because we have gone through a few teething problems in the changeovers, that there will be a change of hotel, and this will be at the Savoy Hotel, rather than The Cliffs Hotel. Your first meeting starts at 5 o'clock on Monday night.

It would be remiss of me not to invite Monica to come and join me on the stage, but you will notice that there is a slight difference. Usually, Monica gives you a little ditty of some kind, or a sing-song. Can I say, if I did that, Congress would finish now. So, Monica, please come and join me on the stage. (*Applause*) Monica, on behalf of the National RMA, we thank you, again, for all you have done. I present you with a card and a little gift for you to get whatever you wish. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Monica, you and I have known each other through little ditties and fun, and your dedication to the job that you have done. It has been absolutely fantastic. I have always been proud — I couldn't do it last year — to chair your conference. I and all of this Congress, and the whole union, wish you well and in good health. On behalf of the Congress, *that* is for you to write some more little ditties and some flowers to say thank you. (*Presentation made amidst a standing ovation*)

SIS. JAN SMITH: Congress, can I say to you that I can hear one man, particularly to Composite 3, who would be saying, "Well done, Pet. Carry on the good work. You're getting there. You never give up." That is the late Billy Hughes. (*Applause*)

SIS MONICA SMITH: I thought that this year I wouldn't be coming to the rostrum, but once again I am. I just want to say a few words. There are so many people who I want to thank, but I really want to thank my regional secretary, Paul McCarthy, who has been so very helpful to me and to my branch secretary.... I've forgotten his name. It's Derek. That's right. He has been absolutely wonderful to me since he has taken over our branch, and he has been wonderful this week. In fact, I feel that this year I have come home, because I am sitting with my region and I am with them in the hotel. I just feel so at home. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Just to let you know, Monica, Paul Kenny will be joining you soon with the retired members. (*Laughter*) Congress, what a wonderful person.

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to Social Policy, and ask Yorkshire to move Composite 13, Southern to second with priority in debate to Northern and Midland

Regions. Then I will call Motion 212, Bridge Maintenance, to be moved by Northern. The CEC support both.

FLOODING IN THE UK: PREVENTION AND DEFENCES COMPOSITE 13

(Covering Motions 209, 210, 211 and 213)

C13 Covering Motions:

209	FLOODS	Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region
210	FLOOD PREVENTION	Midland & East Coast Region
211.	FLOOD DEFENCES	Northern Region
213	FLOODING IN THE UK, CLIMATE CHANGE AND INSURANCE	Southern Region

FLOODING IN THE UK: PREVENTION AND DEFENCES

This Conference is concerned to find that yet again, over last Christmas and New Year, large parts of the UK were seriously flooded. Experts are not clear that is at least in part due to a rise in global temperature and climate change, as outlined in the Paris Climate Change Conference of December 2015. This conference agreed to limit temperature rise to between 1-2 degrees over the next decade and beyond.

This clearly recognized that climate change and temperature rise will happen globally and in the UK. This temperature rise will lead to warmer weather fronts across the Atlantic and the UK, which will retain more water vapour and that will be deposited across the UK as increased rainfall.

This Conference notes the brilliant work undertaken by Environment Agency workers during the floods of late 2015 and early 2016. GMB is proud of its members and the very hardworking engineers who work for the Environment Agency. They have made superhuman efforts to try and protect cities and towns all around the region and beyond. The emergency services do need public support and public investment.

GMB believes that pressure must be brought to bear on the government to fully fund the Environment Agency, not cut its budget and to fully fund new flood defences where they are necessary. Not just in York but in other areas of Yorkshire, including the Upper Calder Valley as well as the rest of the country.

GMB has a very high regard for emergency workers, including the members of the Fire Brigades union, who are often not given the credit by Tory government ministers for their tireless work helping those who found their homes and businesses inundated over the Christmas and New Year period.

This Conference condemns the lack of investment, planning and political intent to prevent and alleviate the impact of flooding leading to homes and businesses being devastated on an unprecedented scale.

GMB is totally against cuts to flood defence money, which has taken place over the past five years. This is not the answer to the issue: The answer has to be to increase it. The floods are not, as government ministers have said in the past, a once in a generation event, they are occurring on an increasingly regular basis.

George Osborne was criticised by academics who said their analysis showed that flood defence spending had fallen. Prof Simon Wren-Lewis of Oxford University said the government had shown no sign of taking into account the increasing threat of extreme weather.

“What you would really expect is to see spending at a much higher level. It doesn’t seem like the same kind of reaction which we know has happened to the threat of terrorism, where we know spending levels have increased by a large magnitude” he said.

GMB supports the recent comments of the Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, who called for greater flood defence spending after experts criticised the chancellor, George Osborne, for prioritising cutting the deficit.

Congress notes the lack of support and resources that have been devoted and direction by Government to ensure rivers and watercourses are properly maintained, that flood plains are correctly managed and housing planning consents are strictly controlled in flood risk areas. Lessons are still not being learnt and the relaxation of planning regulation ensures that houses are being built in questionable locations particularly as regards flooding risks.

GMB believes a full enquiry should be held to ascertain whether government ideological cuts are to blame for the misery heaped on the people who are affected by recent floods. Many of those affected by the flood found themselves uninsured and unable to pay for the damage and repair their property. They also found that without new flood prevention measures that the insurance companies would not insure those that did have insurance, when their insurance was due for renewal.

This Conference calls on the GMB to support and campaign:

- For the launch of a public inquiry into this winter’s floods and to increase funding as a matter of urgency.
- For increased spending on more effective programmes of flood defences and flood avoidance measures to reflect the changing climate that is happening in the UK.
- To ensure that the government works with the insurance industry to ensure that people in these areas are able to insure their houses and businesses against flooding in the future. Congress believes that without a co-ordinated approach to flood defences and maintenance, local people, businesses and infrastructure will continually be plagued by avoidable weather events.

(Carried)

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Composite 13. On Boxing Day 2015 the effects of Storm Eva were felt. The rain fell, the water flowed into our towns, our houses and our businesses indiscriminately. It flowed unchecked. It was a torrent of mother nature storming its way into every nook and cranny. My region was hit badly. Leeds, York and the Calder Valley were hit by the wrath of Eva. I have to say that the emergency services needs and thanks and recognition for their tireless during what should have been a time with their families and loved ones. Many gave their own time to support the people, their homes and businesses, finding themselves under siege by the welter. This Government does not give them credit for going above and beyond the call of duty, despite the cuts to their sector. To you all, we say thank you. *(Applause)*

In Leeds alone 3,996 properties were affected, 2,711 of which were residential. The council is still trying to assess the full cost six months on. It is safe to say that it would have been a lot higher had it been a working day. In Leeds there was a proposal for a £180 million scheme that would have provided a 1-in-200-year standard, but this Government pulled the funding. One stage 1 of three stages have been completed. We now only have funding for a 1-in-75-year standard. How is it that this Government can find £297 million for flood defences in the Thames Valley alone, and yet abandon the north? Cameron, your cruel cuts cost people their homes, their livelihoods, their jobs and, sadly, in some cases, their lives.

A family-run printing firm in the Kelsall Road area, an area hit severely by the flooding on Boxing Day, after three generations has closed its doors. Only a small percentage of its highly-skilled, sector-specific staff, have found new jobs. A man moving here from Syria to build a new life started his takeaway with his savings brought with him, a new life that he was looking forward to. He had no insurance, so his business is destroyed. His life has been destroyed again.

Being on a flood plain means no flood insurance, and insurance companies have had to cope with the huge cost from flood-damage claims, the total of which, at the moment, could be as high as £5 billion! Small businesses are unable to insure themselves because the premiums are too high or insurance companies refuse to accept the risks. Cameron, cuts to flood defences is a false economy. Surely, prevention is better than cure. Flood defence schemes cost less than mopping up afterwards, and it is disturbing that as climate change worsens, flood rise defence systems like *these* are being downgraded. Cameron, you need to re-think your Government's flood defence strategy, as the York residents vocalised loudly when you dared to show your smug face all for a picture opportunity. You can't say you weren't warned.

This Government has ignored red flag after red flag, and since the start of his Premiership he has cut flood defences by 27% year on year. Adapting to climate change, principally flooding, is the responsibility of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. In May 2013, the then Environment Secretary, Owen Paterson, cut the number of officials working on the National Adaptation Programme from 38 to 6.

Congress, the cost to the lives of the people affected is not just monetary, but it is also emotional. We ask that Congress supports a campaign to call for a public inquiry into the floods and to increase funding as a matter of urgency. We ask that this Congress call on the Government to commit to increased grant support to local councils. We also ask that you, as a union, campaign for increased spending on more effective programmes for flood defence and avoidance measures to reflect climate change. We also ask that we campaign to ensure that the Government works with the insurance industry to ensure that people in these areas are able to insure against flooding in the future. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cindy.

BRO. G. WHITE (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a second-time speaker. (*Applause*) It is my privilege to second this composite motion: C13,

Flooding in the UK: Prevention and Defences. Many of us here have had firsthand experience of dealing with flood water. At its best, it is disruptive, and at its worst it is devastating. As branch secretary for the Environment Agency, I welcome the fact within this motion, but take this opportunity to thank the countless heroes from many organisations and across the country who responded to the floods in all manner of ways, offering shelter and refuge as well as rescue, helping to repair and rebuild, as well as sweep away the sewage.

It is worrying that once-in-a-generation rainfall events seem to be happening more and more frequently. It is reasonable to expect our Government to properly fund our defence. Instead, the Environment Agency has been met with effective pay cuts and successive job cuts, not to mention the recent payroll debacle. We are told that flood-risk management jobs are protected, but when it is literally all hands to the pump it is not just the flooding guys with their boots went. This motion calls for a number of measures, which I wholeheartedly support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, this union was the only union that lobbied the water company, whilst at the same time that people were being flooded, the Environment Agency was making a number of members redundant. We went across and we tried to stop their meeting, but also to praise those individuals, even though they knew their working life was coming to an end. Even if we could not stop it, they went and dug everything they could to help those who needed them. So I thank you on behalf of everyone, you and your team for that. *(Applause)*

I call Yorkshire. *(No response)* I call Southern. *(No response)* Anyone?

BRO. T. MARTIN (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker to Congress. *(Applause)* I am speaking in support of Composite 13: Flood Defences. As the mover of the composite has said, this Government needs to intervene and sort out a number of problems with the flooding. It needs to be proactive, not reactive, and it is not very good at being reactive. One area that definitely needs to be addressed involves planning consents for new housing. It is absolute madness that houses are built near rivers and on flood plains. The builders and utilities have to work in a piecemeal fashion to put the basic utilities in. There appears to be little or no co-ordination from government. Planning guidance, if anything, is becoming even more relaxed under this Government. In addition to planning consents, the fact is that not enough has been spent on the maintenance of rivers and water courses.

Look at what happened in Glenridding, Carlisle, York and various other places, not forgetting Newby Bridge, who have been told that they will now have to wait five years for a new bridge and put up with a pontoon idea for the next five years. Volunteers in Glenridding brought their own plant and machinery, dredged the local stream that had become an absolute torrent. It was volunteers and the local community working together that helped save Glenridding from disaster.

So, Congress, we need government to be active, not leave things to nature. We need government to invest and we need government to provide the common sense protections that communities and businesses need. Thank you.

SIS. J. SHAW (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of Composite 13: Flooding in the UK: Prevention and Defences. President, I class myself extremely lucky to live in a house that never has nor never will suffer from the devastating effects of flooding, but my heart goes out to those who have and to those who are still suffering devastation on unprecedented scales. Houses can be repaired and rebuilt, but that does not help those left with post-traumatic stress. A daily fear of this happening again is immeasurable, with absolutely no guarantee that this will not happen again. Homes and business built up over years, suddenly and without warning, were wiped out.

Building regulations require certain levels of permeable drainable, but this does not address the thousands of patios, concrete driveways, foot paths and roads, for example, that have already been built and which have damaged the water table across the whole of our country. Planners, therefore, need tighter, not relaxed, planning regulations, especially scrutinising applications made within green and brown-field sites, which are higher risk areas.

Water companies have and continue to fail in their duty to clear ditches on our country's moors, as do farmers within their fields and land. I visited Keswick in February of this year. I had seen the reports on TV showing the vast volumes of water, but I was stunned when weeks later the damage and pollution was still visible, not only within properties but in the fields and in the hedgerows. It was an environmental disaster! Therefore, we must invest to alleviate the impact of flooding by investing now in the best preventative and hold products that exist. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Mark Sykes to respond on behalf of the CEC, please?

BRO. M. SYKES (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, covering Motion 212 and Composite 13. Congress, the flooding of recent years has caused widespread and avoidable devastation to many parts of the nation, including my own region, Yorkshire and north Derbyshire. I am very proud of the role that GMB has played in helping the communities respond and rebuild after the floods. I am proud to say that the CEC is supporting Motion 212 and Composite 13 with a qualification.

Motion 212 highlights a rarely-considered outcome of flooding in terms of structure safety of bridges. The qualification is that whilst we will push for recognition of this issue closer to the time, it is now too early to specify key priorities of Labour's 2020 manifesto. We would not wish to limit the Labour Party's ability to respond to future events in the run-up to the next election.

On Composite 13, the Government are already making arrangements for an insurance scheme for high-flood risk properties. The scheme is heavily flawed and is likely only to benefit the insurance industry. The qualification is that we should be working with other unions and calling for a better programme of alternative investment, rather than widespread adoption of an existing flooding scheme.

Congress, to summarise, the CEC asks you to support Motion 212 and Composite 13 with the qualifications that I have just given. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark. Now you have heard the qualification, do the movers of Motion 212 wish to move their motion?

BRIDGE MAINTENANCE MOTION 212

212. BRIDGE MAINTENANCE

This Conference notes that after several floods the state of bridges in local communities can be in a parlous state. Congress calls on the Government to commit to increased grant support to local councils and other authorities with bridge maintenance responsibilities, so that major disruptions to communities caused by recent storms is prevented. Congress calls on this to be a key part of Labour's Policy making debates as it formulates a manifesto for 2020.

G13 GATESHEAD LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. HENWOOD (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 212: Bridge Maintenance. The floods of late 2015 and early 2016 caused devastation to many communities. We saw what happened in Hebden Bridge when the bridge collapsed. We saw the trauma caused by landslips on the main road from Keswick to Grassmere, which prevented traffic travelling from the Lakes. Further afield, we witnessed on our TV screens all the panic and concern when the bridge collapsed at Tadcaster, which resulted in two communities. Congress, the Government knows about the problem. It is a problem which has existed for 20 years or more. Communities can't get adequate insurance, and households and businesses cannot go about their daily lives because the Government are inadequately protecting communities. Key areas like bridge maintenance and repair are vital across the UK. The Government wants to continue to cut funding to local governments and replace the Revenue Support Grant that goes to councils with a new Business Rate.

Congress, in areas like the Northern Region, it will take up to a billion pounds out of public expenditure. It is vital that the central Government properly resource local councils and agencies so that repair and maintenance of bridges continues and a backlog does not build up. We are paying for years of cutting funding in this vital area. People who need this work to be done should not have to fear being cut off every time there is heavy rain. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. Does Yorkshire accept the CEC qualification? *(Agreed)* Does Southern Region accept the CEC qualification? *(Agreed)* Does Midland Region accept the CEC qualification? *(Agreed)* Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Composite 13 and Motion 212? Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Composite 13 and Motion 212? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I will now put them to the vote. All those in favour of Composite 13 and Motion 212, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Composite 13 was CARRIED.
Motion 212 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Motion 141 and then Composite 12.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK
EXTENDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT
MOTION 141**

141. EXTENDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Congress agrees, Article 6 of the Human Rights Act, the right to a fair hearing does not come into effect until you are within the official court system. A disciplinary hearing can be as unfair as the presiding officers wish to make them. They know that the only redress you have is to bring an industrial tribunal. And bringing one of those now costs you money. There is a form to fill in and you might get a cost reduction or it might be free. But it might not. Forms deter, and uncertainty over costs deters more. By the time you get to this point you have probably had a strenuous investigation, a disciplinary and an appeal. It's daunting, exhausting and emotionally drained. The system now deters you. If you want justice in your case it now costs you and charging for justice is not right.

The Congress asks that the GMB campaigns for the extension of the Human Rights Act across all aspects of the practice of disciplinary procedures.

BARKING & DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. M. WATSON (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 141: Extending the Human Rights Act, and particularly the right to a fair trial across the disciplinary process.

When a worker is suspended, a long and very complicated process kicks in. It's rather tedious as well. It takes time and during that time, when the evidence is being gathered against your member, you will get to know them very well. You will get to know their case back to front as well. Then you will receive what they call the Investigatory Bundle. It is filled with evidence against your member, and when it comes in sometimes it looks like *War and Peace*. It's enormous. When you see that, your heart will sink. Then you will approach it a little bit more systematically with, maybe, your timelines. You will start to see some inconsistencies. You will see that, owing to the statement, person X could not have seen Y because they can't see through walls. Maybe, in relation to that particular statement, that person wasn't even there, and that's hearsay. My personal favourite is two statements, two-and-a-half pages long, each one about 90% identical to each other. If I was going to mark those people as if they were producing an essay, I would have failed both of them for plagiarising.

So now you think you've got a chance. Then they send out an invite. They invite you and your member to the disciplinary, and they say you can call witnesses. In fact, it is your duty to call them and to make them attend. I would want to question those people who made statements against my member. Because they are operational within the area that my member came from, we actually have to ask permission for this because they have to be released from work. So we say that we would like to talk to those people, and the reply is, "No, you can't. They're too scared to turn up. They

are scared of me”. I am very polite about this. So when we get to the disciplinary, there may be eight people ranged against you two, and our arguments are ignored. We are told that it is all irrelevant. The evidence is presented and it is hierarchical. So whatever the manager says carries far more weight than whatever the worker actually says. And we can’t talk to our witnesses either, because none of them would turn up. Nine times out of 10 our member is pushed out at the end of this.

At this point, you would, probably, and quite rightly, think that this is completely morally wrong, but it is not illegal. You can be as unfair as you like in the investigation, as unfair as you like in the disciplinary and as unfair as you like in the later appeal. Your right to a fair trial only kicks in when you move to formal litigation, and that is only when you move to an industrial tribunal.

There is a cost here. There may be rebates, there may be reductions but, after being on the losing side for a long time, your member is generally beaten down and they frequently give up. From this, we can generally see that the right to justice in this case depends on your ability to pay, and that is not right.

This motion calls upon us to extend the Human Rights Act, particularly the right to a fair trial across the disciplinary process, across the appeal and across the investigation. It is the only way actually to level the playing field. It is the only way for our members actually to get a fair crack of the whip for this. I move.

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

BRO. G. PALMER (London): Congress, I second Motion 141 on Extending the Human Rights Act. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*)

Congress, when tribunal claim fees were introduced, the socially-economic poor were instantly disadvantaged. We know that the imposition of fees was just another green light for bad employers to continue mistreating their employees without any fear of any real repercussions. The fees for equal pay or discrimination claims are higher than that of other claims at £1,200. That means that those with protected characteristics are especially hindered from seeking justice. They are especially hindered from receiving a fair trial. There has been no real change in the rate of success of claims, despite less claims being made. In the financial year just gone, there was a 58% reduction in the amount of claims when compared with the year before fees were introduced. Sexual discrimination claims were reduced by 83% in the year following the introduction of fees. Do we really believe that bad employers have eliminated that kind of behaviour to that extent? We know better!

Currently, our members face the equivalent of going into a restaurant, sitting at the table to eat, being served three courses of faeces, and being told by the manager, “If they complain to the local authority, when the food hygiene officers turn up they will evaluate the meal according to food hygiene standards”. It’s not right. People, as we have heard, should receive a fair trial at every part of the disciplinary procedure. We cannot truly claim to be building a 21st century union when we are allowing discrimination of this nature to continue. It has to stop, it has to stop now and we have to ensure equal rights to equality, dignity and fairness in the workplace, not just in

tribunals but in the workplace where our members, by having the Human Rights Act apply to all parts of the disciplinary procedure. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gavin. I ask London to move the Human Rights Act, which covers Motions 187 and 188.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

COMPOSITE 12

(Covering Motions 187 and 188)

C12 Covering Motions:

187	HUMAN RIGHTS ACT	London Region
188	BRITISH BILL OF RIGHTS	Southern Region

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Congress believes that our Human Rights Act protects every one of us. It is a statement of the basic values and law protecting a small collection of some very basic, fundamental, and not at all controversial rights.

The right:

- To life
- To freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- To liberty and security
- To freedom from slavery and forced labour
- To a fair trial
- To no punishment without law
- To respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- To freedom of thought, belief and religion
- To freedom of expression
- To freedom of assembly and association
- To marry and start a family
- To protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- To peaceful enjoyment of your property
- To education
- To participate in free elections

The Tory Government wants to scrap our Human Rights Act and replace it with a quickly pushed through "British Bill of Human Rights and Responsibilities". The covert purposes of the British Bill of Rights are to grant extended powers to businesspeople, employers, landlords and merchants, and to deregulate business as a counterpart to international trade agreements (e.g. TTIP).

The Bill has wide-ranging implications including the loss of statutory minimum wage and maximum working hours, removal of trade barriers including Health and Safety protection and the dismantling of the welfare state. The Government is not consulting in good faith with the workers, tenants and consumers who will be adversely affected.

This Conference agrees that the existing Human Rights Act is vital to safeguarding employment rights, and the proposed British Bill of Rights must be stopped. This would weaken the rights of everyone, which means less or no protection against powerful interests, greater inequality and more injustice.

We call upon Congress to:

1. Get commitment from the Labour Party to re-instate the Act in full, when re-elected (if it is repealed), speak in favour of the Act and vote against repealing it when it is read in Parliament.
2. Launch a high profile campaign to highlight the Bill's covert purposes, including engaging with the Government's consultation process, sponsoring expert legal advice, political lobbying
3. Raise awareness to members via dedicated web pages on the GMB website, training, a petition to government and conducting polls and surveys, etc.
3. Give guidance to members on how to challenge mis-representation of the Human Rights Act and human rights generally in media and politically.
4. Promote the great work and resources of human rights groups that GMB is already affiliated to or might like to affiliate to in order to enable us to strategise, plan and co-ordinate action.

(Carried)

BRO. G. BRUNNING (London): Congress, I move Motion 187: Human Rights Act. The idea that as humans we possess the right to a set of inherent and inalienable human rights can be traced as far back as 1215, the signing of the Magna Carta, which contained the writ of habeas corpus, allowing people to appeal against imprisonment without trial. This laid the foundations for the development of the history of human rights in Britain.

The year 1647 saw the Levellers call for liberty of conscience in matters of religion, for all laws to apply equally and that no one should be discriminated against on the grounds of tenure, estate, charter or place of birth, culminating in 1689 with the introduction of the Bill of Rights.

The year 1918 saw the introduction of the Representation of the People Act, which gave women the right to vote. 1948 saw the introduction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the most important agreements in the history of human rights. 1950 saw the introduction of the European Convention of Human Rights introduced and signed by Britain in 1951. 1967 saw the introduction of the Sexual Offences Act and the decriminalisation of homosexuality. 1975 and 1976 saw the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts introduced, making it illegal to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender and race, together with the introduction of the concept of indirect discrimination. Fast forward to 1988, which saw the then Labour Government introduce the Human Rights Act containing a set of civil and legal rights, regarded as fundamental to any fair and just society.

The point I make is this. Throughout history individuals, organisations and governments have sought to improve human rights for the greater good, with the aim of removing social injustice and including social order, promoting equality, acceptance, diversity and tolerance, something that as activists we fight for on a daily basis on behalf of our members, yet this Government is choosing to scrap the Human Rights Act by the very suggestion that it goes against the principles on which the Human Rights Act was founded. This Government want to replace the Human Rights Act with a quickly rushed-through British Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. Why? Simply because this Government wants to further empower employers and to continue to restrict hard-fought employment rights, including the removal of health

and safety protection, with the clear intention of dismantling the welfare state. This unwarranted and unnecessary attack must be stopped.

We call on Congress to get a firm commitment from the Labour Party to reinstate the Human Rights Act when re-elected, if appealed, to speak in favour of the Act and to vote against repealing the Act when read in Parliament, to launch a high-profile campaign to highlight the Government's attack on the Human Rights Act, utilising expert-legal advice and political lobbying, to provide guidance to members through dedicated web pages demonstrating how to challenge employers and the misrepresentation of the Human Rights Act within the media and political forum, and to promote the outstanding work already done by the GMB and those human rights groups that we affiliate to. We must co-ordinate further action.

The Human Rights Act is deeply rooted in our culture with over 800 years of history.

THE PRESIDENT: Gordon, wind up, please.

BRO. BRUNNING: So before you vote, I would like to remind you, brothers, sisters and comrades, we are human! We have rights and we must act now! Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Southern.

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Congress, I second this composite motion. I will keep this really quick because that was so brilliant from Gordon. The one point I would add is that there is some confusion about our protection under the Human Rights Act under the European Court of Human Rights and its association with the EU. Literally, the only thing I want to add is that even if you want out of the EU, we still desperately need to protect our European Court of Human Rights that is always under attack from businesses and governments that wish to diminish it, and the British Bill of Rights is an absolute travesty. Other than that, what can I say? They are basic rights for humans. Anyone who wants to cut or diminish them in any way are absolute scum and we must fight them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Brian Farr from the South West Region to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. B. FARR (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 141: Extending the Human Rights Act, for which the CEC is seeking reference. The CEC will naturally support the general principle that employees should be treated fairly in any disciplinary process. In general, Article 6 — the right to a fair trial in criminal proceedings of the European Convention — has been engaged more commonly in disciplinary matters involving professional employers. The effect of Article 6 is to change the disciplinary process into much more of a judicial one with lawyers being involved and witnesses being cross-examined. This has been an unfortunate feature of the employment tribunal system, and has not always been to the benefit of trade unions. The effect is to provide a right to legal representation as opposed to trade union representation.

Further, employees in the private sector cannot rely directly on Article 6, for there is an anomaly in this regard. The CEC will, undoubtedly, support the general objectives of fairness, but it is recommended that the matter be referred for further consideration in the light of the wider policy considerations that arise for the union. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking you to refer Motion 141.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Does London accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Now can I move to the vote. This involves Motion 141 and Composite 12, all those in favour please show?

*Motion 141 was REFERRED.
Composite 12 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to section 10: Political and Motion 196, to be moved by London.

**POLITICAL: RACISM & FASCISM
COUNTER EXTREMISM STRATEGY
MOTION 196**

196. COUNTER EXTREMISM STRATEGY

This Congress recognises that the Government's Counter-Extremism along with the Trade Union Bill, the Investigatory Powers Bill and threats to the Human Rights Act are part of a swathe of measures being pursued by this Government to weaken genuine democracy adversely affecting not only Trade Unions but a whole range of other organisations including ant-racist groups, faith organisations and solidarity campaigns.

It calls on the CEC therefore to continue to raise awareness of these attacks within the membership and to actively campaign against them.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. HUNT (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 196. This motion shines a light on how this Government is relentlessly tampering with, extending and introducing a plethora of legislation designed to undermine our rights and freedoms. Yesterday Congress discussed the Trade Union Bill, a Bill brought forward to restrict already straight-jacketed laws that govern workers' rights. I am not going to go over that ground, as delegates made perfectly clear what they thought about the Tories on this score. But I want to argue that the Trade Union Bill is part of an overall strategy that aims to silence dissent and make opposition to the ruling-class assault that is currently being waged on us all as difficult as possible to resist. This is divisive, pernicious legislation that is aimed at creating a climate of suspicion and fear. Firstly, the Investigatory Powers Bill, proposed by Teresa May last year, is a spying charter that makes dodgy practices legal. No part of our life is out of bounds. They can read your emails, hack your phones or your laptops and check your activities online, amongst many other intrusions. May justifies the Bill with the talk of transparency, and Tory MPs run with the tired old mantra "If you've nothing to hide, you've nothing to fear", but we know from the blacklisted workers who appeared this week at this Conference, who were spied on and vilified for doing their job as health and safety reps and shop stewards in the workplace, that we do have something to fear. It

is the duty of trade unions to question and challenge grubby legislation designed to strength the arm of our opponents.

Finally, and most disturbingly, in my opinion, as part of this overall strategy, the offensive that the Tories are pushing is a prevent strategy. Prevent forces public sector workers in councils, schools, universities, prisons the NHS, as well as nursery teachers and child minders, to act as spies, forced to report their suspicions of radicalisation. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a climate of fear and suspicion, and a disproportionate Islamophobic targeting of those of the Muslim faith. A 10-year-old boy in Lancashire was pulled out of his class for writing “I live in a terrorist house”. When asked what he meant by terrorist, he said: “A terraced house”. So he was being pulled up for being rubbish at spelling. In my own borough in Islington, a horrified mother has official complained about the policy, and she is backed by the local NUT and the local council, after her 14 year-old boy was pulled out of class and interrogated after referring to eco-terrorism during a discussion about the environment. He was asked if he was affiliated to ISIS. Consider the school student who was targeted at school for carrying pro-Palestinian badges and leaflets, taken to a special constable in the school, sat down, questioned on his views on Palestine and Israel, and told never to speak about the issue in or out of school again. Police were sent to his house later to interrogate him further. His reading of the situation is that it was not about Palestine. It was about a Muslim person supporting Palestine.

In February this year, the Government’s own Tory watchdog called for an independent review. David Anderson QC, who reviews terror legislation, said: “The lack of transparency in the operation of Prevent encourages rumour and mistrust and spreads fear and it festers fear. It is also that aspects of the programme are being applied in an insensitive and discriminatory manner”. This is their own person saying this. I’m sorry.

Finally, our young people should not be targeted and discriminated against in this way, and our young people —

THE PRESIDENT: Julie, will you close please.

SIS. HUNT: Support.

BRO. D. POLE (London): Congress, I second Motion 196: Counter Extremism Strategy. Comrades, this wretched Government is weak, but whilst it is a joy to see them fighting each other, we also know them to be vindictive and ruthless in pursuing policies that they see as favouring their class and dividing ours. Truly, they still are the nasty party! We have seen their actions and wish list on the Trade Union Bill. Rest assured, given the chance, they will attack us again and again. Likewise, they wish to replace the Human Rights Act with a British Bill of Rights, weakening genuine rights for millions. Similar attacks, such as the Investigatory Powers Act and the Freedom of Information Act, attempt to severely restrict accountability. The counter-extremism strategy is part of an all-out crackdown on civil liberties and has already been wrongly used against children, students, anti-austerity campaigners and primarily those of the Muslim faith. Another thing that the Terrorism watchdog reports is that the strategy has become a significant source of grievance among British Muslims and it is not working. No wonder all the educational unions are against this.

This Bill prohibits discussion, yet discussion is, surely, one of the best ways to counter terrorism. Civil liberties, genuine freedom of speech and the right to religious and cultural expression have taken years to establish, and civil wars have been fought to achieve them. These rights are under attack from this vicious Government today. We must fight to protect them. Support this resolution, please. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Dick. I now put Motion 196 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 196 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask London to move Motion 195: Solidarity with Refugees.

SOLIDARITY WITH REFUGEES MOTION 195

195. SOLIDARITY WITH REFUGEES

Congress agrees Europe is witnessing the biggest movement of people since the Second World War. Already this year, nearly 3000 people have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach Europe while thousands more languish in camps in the most appalling conditions.

The Government's response has been completely inadequate and has sought to demonise people who are fleeing war, poverty and persecution.

To challenge racism, Islamophobia and the scapegoating of migrants and refugees.

Congress believes that:

1. The hundred thousand people who attended the "Refugees Welcome" March in London demonstrates there is widespread support for allowing more refugees into the UK.
2. The Government's austerity measures pose far greater threat to the public's standard of living than migrants and refugees.
3. Our Trade Union must campaign to make "Refugees Welcome Here" a reality.

We call upon Congress to:

1. Support and publicise Stand Up to Racism's, union/workers solidarity, appeal delegation to Calais, other refugee activities.
2. To support annual national demo in March to mark UN Anti-Racism Day.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. T. CHANA (London): Congress, I move Motion 195 in the name of Solidarity with Refugees. President and delegates, we need to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Europe and open our doors to the refugees. We also need to confront the myths and negative stereotypes spread by politicians and the media. It is utterly disgraceful

and shameful for Cameron to refer to refugees as “swarms”. By their legal definition, Congress, asylum seekers are not illegal immigrants or scroungers. Let’s just dispel some myths, Congress. “Britain will let anyone in”. Fact: the UK asylum system is the toughest, with 40% on average being granted as asylum. “Britain is a magnet for refugees”. Congress, in 2014, just over 24,000 attempted to claim asylum, whilst in Germany it was 97,000. “The myth that asylum and a drain on the economy and the welfare state”. The fact is, Congress, that people claiming asylum cannot get council accommodation. They cannot work, so are vulnerable to exploitation, and many do not know of the benefits system. All they want is a place of safety.

Congress, what would make you leave your home? What would make you trust your life to a boat or make you walk for days on end? It is estimated, Congress, that 880,000 men, women and children have made dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean and the Aegean Seas. The countries that these refugees come from are forced to flee from some form of war, conflict or persecution. So, Congress, rather than demonise and blame these people, if we actually looked at what they are fleeing from, you would do the same. We need to hear their stories to find out why they make these journeys. We need to find out the reasons why they were forced to leave. What happens? When you find that out, it will shatter the narrative in the media and the mouths of the politicians. We can change the narrative of the refugee crisis by raising awareness in our workplaces during Refugee Week on 20th June and during Migrant Day on 18th December.

Congress, both I and my family were refugees, having to flee a regime. We were given 24 hours or face persecution or death. Like these people, I am more than a refugee. I am a trade unionist making a contribution just like you for an equal, a fairer and a just society. The refugee crisis is affecting almost every corner of the world. For refugees it is an escape from oppressive regimes, poverty and war. When you are faced with death, you do not think about being a burden on the economy or the welfare state. You just want to be safe. We are all similar, Congress, and more than you can imagine. We must do everything we can. We need to challenge and address the root cause of the migration in Europe. In practice, we are focusing firmly on the efforts of preventing illegal migration rather than addressing the root causes, providing safe and legal access to asylum for those in need. We need to make sure that we do not allow fears about the refugee crisis to override our concerns for our fellow human beings, who are bearing the blunt of the conflicts and geo-political struggles.

Congress, refugees don’t make wars. Wars make refugees. These people are running from killing. As trade unionists we must stand up for these refugees in solidarity and not allow them to be used as a scapegoat for the reason behind the mass movement of men, women and children. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. S. DOHERTY (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) It is a privilege for me to second Motion 195 as the Congress comes to a close today: Solidarity with Refugees. If we rewind to the history of Croatia, we were all meant to be the custodian of the war. Nature compels women to seek protection and run for safety. So current war outbreaks which are not the wish of

the refugees have necessitated women refugees in as safe an environment as ours. Congress, I am therefore seconding this motion asking Congress to support and publicise *Stand Up To Racism*. We must campaign to make refugees welcome here a reality. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. GOLDING (Southern): I would like to support Motion 195: Solidarity with Refugees. I accompanied a delegation of teachers from Lambeth to Calais in February to distribute donations of writing material, clothes, tents and food. What I saw gave me nightmares. There are no words to describe the filth, the cold and the mud that these people were living in. I saw children trying to receive an education in a place where distractions were all around them. I saw adults coming out and going into the Jungle school — I mean, whoever called it a “Jungle” has, obviously, never been to a jungle — where there were no exotic wild life or the beautiful sweet smells of the rain forest. It was just cold, filthy mud. Yet these children seemed so keen to learn and happy to be at school that it broke your heart.

My parents came to Britain in the ‘50s as immigrants. They were invited to come to Britain to help to rebuild the “Great” in Great Britain. They stayed for 10 years, and in that time they felt isolated, vulnerable and were subjected to racism, which is not that different from what the refugees are feeling right now living here. My parents saw how the climate in this country was going, and they felt that they did not want their children to be brought up in this country, just like the refugees. My parents left England and travelled to a country where they felt that their children would be given a better life and a better opportunity, just like the refugees. We ended up in Canada. That’s where the similarities ended. We had a happy ending. We should ensure that the refugees have a happy ending. We, who are the children of immigrants, should show compassion to the refugees on behalf of our parents and grand parents, who left their homes to give their children a better life. I would ask that you support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone else want to speak on the motion? Last one.

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of the motion: Solidarity with Refugees. I wanted to emphasise that some politicians seem to be of the opinion that you acquire your humanity by getting a certain type of passport. You acquire your right to human dignity when you gain legal status within a certain country. We know, as trade unionists, when you acquire humanity. We know it’s when you are a person, and this union will go toe to toe with any organisation, political or otherwise, which tries to divide the working class on racial or ethnic lines. Imagine, if you will, a group of people coming into this country with a religion which seems strange to them. That is the history of my family, emigrating from Ireland and with a Roman Catholic faith. People move, but we understand, as trade unionists, that we are bound by a stronger link than that which seeks to divide us. There are some politicians in this country who subscribe to the Catholic faith, and I want them to ensure that they understand the true tenets of that faith, which is solidarity and love for their man. We will not be divided. Full solidarity. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Now can I call Paul Maloney.

BRO. P. MALONEY (Regional Secretary, Southern): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. I know and we know that GMB members and branches up and down the country, both individually and collectively, are very much involved in the plight of refugees, but the CEC is asking you to refer this motion. The support that the GMB has given to aid refugees is well documented, and we will continue to work with like-minded organisations and anti-racist organisations. GMB has taken part in demonstrations in support of refugees, including UN anti-racist day events, and discussions are underway in the CEC to offer more formal support. However, although the plight of the refugees is an emotional issue, we would need to take time to fully investigate the policy and implications of some of the demands within this motion. For example, it is not clear that this would tie us to sending a delegation to Calais. If we were to go there, what would we do when we got there? It calls for us to stand up to racism. We would need to look into the organisation as their values might not be in line with the GMB's values, and when GMB wants to do something for vulnerable people, we want to do it in GMB style, as we have done here this week.

The GMB does support and recognise the plight of migrants, many of whom are the victims of capitalist war-mongering. If we are going to support, let's do it right, in the true spirit of the GMB. Let the CEC have a look at it and, please, refer this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept reference back? *(Agreed)* Does Conference agree? *(Agreed)* All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 195 was REFERRED.

ADDRESS BY GLENIS WILLMOTT MEP

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Glenis Willmott to Congress. Glenis is well known to us at the GMB as she was a senior organiser and political officer in the Midland & East Coast Region. She has been a Labour MEP since 2006, Labour's Leader in Europe since 2009 and a highly valued member of the European Socialist Group. As an influential member of the European Parliament she has taken principled decisions on votes on trade agreements, against tax dodgers and greedy bankers, and has stood up for working people not just in Britain but across the EU.

Glenis, you have been a loyal and valuable friend to the GMB, supporting many of our key campaigns: against the blacklisting of trade union activists; taking a lead in the EU on our Dying to Work campaign for terminally-ill workers; demanding EU action to stop the spread of zero hours and other insecure work contracts; calling for more socially and environmentally sustainable public procurement, and standing up for our EU employment and social rights, including stronger rights for posted workers.

Glenis, I have worked with you on the NEC and you were my neighbour. Let me say that this union and I appreciate your support and leadership in the EU and in the Parliament. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. GLENIS WILLMOTT MEP: Thanks very much, Mary. It is a privilege to be invited here today on behalf of Labour's Members of the European Parliament. It is particularly great for me to be here with Tim Roache. I have known him as a friend for over 26 years. I know he doesn't look old enough but, believe me, he is, unfortunately. But the one thing I do know about Tim is that he always puts the interests of our members first, and that is really important to the GMB.

As a lifelong trade unionist, I am very proud to be a GMB member. I was a GMB officer for 16 years, and that experience has been a huge influence on my political life, because we all know that trade unionists are on the frontline in the battle against injustice in our country. Memories of the cases I dealt with at the GMB have stayed with me throughout my time in the European Parliament. You don't forget the women taking a stand because they are paid less than their male counterparts; the people sacked because their face didn't fit; the workers standing up to employers' efforts to drive down wages and conditions. I came into politics through the trade union Movement, and my trade union values have been at the heart of my work as an MEP. They are the reason why I joined with other Labour colleagues to get better EU working time rules and temporary agency-worker legislation, despite huge pressure from our own Labour government to reject them. It is those same values that means I will be throwing everything I have in the next two weeks at ensuring that Britain remains a member of the European Union, because all the things that we want to achieve — the fights that we need to fight for our members — will be harder if we are outside the EU. Will it be easier to get fair and equal treatment for workers without the protections of EU law? No. Will the concerns that we have about existing legislation be fixed by leaving? No, of course, they won't. We'll be left with even less protection than we have today. Will a Tory Government leave our working rights and health and safety laws in their post-Brexit bonfire of regulations? No; absolutely not, because you only have to take one look at the other side of the referendum debate to see the vision for the leave campaign for workers' rights. They want to cut rights and end provisions for keeping people safe at work. They want to use Brexit as a starting gun in a race to the bottom in working conditions. Removing the safety net of EU rules that ensure free trade is not a complete free-for-all.

I know there are some on the left who have always been opposed to the EU, but does anyone really think that voting to leave the EU gives us a better chance of delivering better politics for working people, for trade union members, for the poorest in our society? Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and Nigel Farage want to lead our country down a very dark path, with nothing to illuminate us about where they plan to take our country. Do we really think that they are the best people to lead the most vulnerable in our society into the darkness? Do we really want a Tory Government which has led an all-out assault on trade union members through their despicable Trade Union Bill to be the ones setting the British agenda outside the EU?

Let's be clear. The economic shock that we will face if we leave will, as usual, hit the working people the hardest. Thousands of jobs are at risk; jobs in manufacturing, the car industry, aerospace and so many more; jobs in the service sector; jobs of our GMB members. It is all very well for the wealthy individuals funding the leave campaign to say that it's a price worth paying. Well, I don't think it is! Try telling that to the people who lose their jobs and still have to feed their kids and pay the rent!

Is everything in Europe perfect? No, of course it isn't. Life's not like that. What's perfect in life? But take one look at some of the concerns we have, some of the parts that we think could be better. I can assure you that Britain leaving the EU is not the answer. Let's have a look at some of them. Let's take TTIP. It is the British Government that is the strongest cheerleader for the neo-liberalism in trade deals in the EU. Imagine what any eventual deal would look like if negotiated by David Cameron alone, or by one of the Euro-sceptic Tories who see the EU referendum as their route to Downing Street. Only by using our alliances across Europe can we win the protections for public services that the trade unions and Labour are fighting to secure.

It is the same story for the concerns that people have about the privatisation agenda. For those who see the EU as some kind of corporate club — I hear this all the time — again, take a look at who is running our country, that who is leading the campaign to leave the EU. For those of us who want positive and progressive policies in our country, our best hope is by working with our European partners, working with countries that have found ways to support their industries in times of crisis.

After the financial crisis hit, Labour MEPs played a big role in shaping new regulations, capping bankers' bonuses, and quite right, too; tackling the extreme risk taking that had led to the dangerous casino culture in the financial services sector. How did we deliver this change? It was through the EU. It wouldn't have happened had it been left to a Tory government. They fought our proposals all the way. But by working with our colleagues across the Continent, we delivered progressive change, right here in Britain.

So to those who worry about some aspects of the EU, it is not a new relationship with Europe that we need but a new government in Westminster that will put people first.
(Applause)

Congress, take one look at who we are up against, and it is clear that it is essential for working people that we win this referendum, but our members would, rightly, expect us to do more. Remaining in Europe is crucial, but it must be the start of something and not an end in itself. We need a new workers' agenda in Europe because employers have found new ways of working and, in too many cases, those new ways of working have been good for the profit margin but bad for workers. For too many people it is a story of less security and more exploitation. Our EU rights, as important as they are, have not always kept pace with the changes that the GMB and other unions are dealing with every day. So we, Labour, Britain's unions and our sister organisations across Europe need to be leading the campaign to strengthen workers' rights, to stop employers from playing one group of workers off against another as a way to undercut negotiated pay conditions, to stop agencies that only advertise jobs abroad, to take action bogus self-employment and exploitative zero hours contracts and, by the way, to treat terminally ill employees with a compassion that they deserve.
(Applause)

When companies compete across Europe, they should be competing on quality, not on how poorly they can treat their staff, and they should not be competing on how best they can organise their tax affairs, either. Europe is already making a start in delivering reforms to tackle the worst examples of tax evasion and tax avoidance that

have been exposed in recent months. Our new Agenda for Europe must include keeping up the pressure for action to ensure that everyone pays their fair share, but we can't do any of that out of Europe with the Tories in Downing Street. So, first, we have to win the referendum. Let's be clear about the choice we have on 23rd June. There are only two options on the ballot paper: Remain or leave. There isn't a "Remain but", and there isn't a "Leave but we'll keep the bits that we like". I know that Europe can sometimes feel remote, but it might feel like the easier thing to do is to sit back and do nothing. Let the Tories fight it out. But we all know that doing nothing is a decision in itself, and it is the decision that Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and Nigel Farage were hoping our trade unions would take. Well, they were wrong!

The leave campaign has no interest in defending workers. They talk of ending regulation but refuse to say which health and safety rules they would scrap. They are willing to stoke the fear of immigration — that is disgraceful — but oppose the wording rights and support our public services that would address many of the concerns that people have. For the leading lights of the leave campaign, this isn't about pragmatic politics. It's about ideology. They know that jobs will be lost; they know that people will be poorer, but they see this as a price worth paying to achieve their neo-liberal netherland, a price worth paying for a world where employers are free from these "pesky" rules, like minimum paid holidays and equal rights, things that we have fought for for years and years. So, for me it is clear, we must put everything we have into winning the referendum and keeping Britain in the European Union. Then, having won that fight, we do what unions do best — we campaign, we fight and we dig in to stop those who want to erode our rights. (*Applause*) We must our issues on to the agenda to deliver the change that we want.

Congress, we have two weeks — two weeks — to protect our jobs, two weeks to save our working rights, two weeks to stop the march of a nasty vicious campaign that is seeking to divide our country. The European values of equality, fairness, solidarity and social justice are our values, too. Once again, trade unions have a fight on their hands. We have two weeks, just two weeks, to make sure that for the sake of workers across Britain this is a fight that we win. Thank's very much. (*A standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I know she is not just an MEP, but she is also our advocate to stop what is going on in Europe and the Tories. She is as honest as a day's long, and what she says she means. It is your rights that she has always been fighting for.

I would also like to say thank you to her husband, Ted, who I know is in the hall, who has so helped in every single way. I would like to present you with this gift so that, on the night of the election, you can cheer and say "Up yours!" Before we carry on with the debate, I would like to welcome — the rest of you have been asking me all week where is she — Barbara, who has arrived in the Congress hall. My shadow let me down this week, but there you are. Never mind. Welcome back. I'll see you later.

CEC STATEMENT ON THE EU REFERENDUM

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 23rd June 2016 GMB members and voters across the UK will decide whether our country will remain a member of the EU or leave. The CEC recognises that this is the biggest decision our members are likely to make in a generation, and it has to be the right decision for our members, their families, for Britain and our future relationships with Europe and the rest of the world.
- 1.2 The CEC knows how important this issue is for our members, and understands their concerns for their jobs, their rights and protections at work, for the economy and, more widely, in their daily lives and the lives of their families for years to come. These concerns are raised clearly in the motions related to the referendum that have been submitted to this Congress.
- 1.3 In view of the great significance of the EU Referendum vote to our members, the CEC is presenting this statement to GMB Congress for debate and decision.

2. GMB in Europe

- 2.1 GMB has long recognised the importance of being active at EU level in campaigning for- and shaping rights and protections for our members and their families. As companies and economies increasingly operate cross border, it is vital that GMB has been able to promote and defend our members' interests at this level, and we have established a proud reputation of doing this successfully.
- 2.2 However, GMB has never been an apologist for the EU. We know the EU isn't perfect, and yes, it needs reforming to re-establish the commitment to the social Europe that our members were promised. We were active in seeing that delivered under Jacques Delors, but have had to fight to defend that progress from being undermined in the years that followed. If the EU is to have a future and regain the support of its people, it has to restore that social balance. Though the EU needs to change, the CEC believes that leaving the EU is not the answer.

- 2.3 That is why the CEC recommended in February that GMB should adopt the position of an “angry yes” to remain in the EU. Too much is at risk to vote to leave the EU, but we won't stop fighting for change for a Europe that works for working people, not big business.
- 2.4 The CEC believes that it is vital for our members to be able to make an informed decision based on the facts of what remaining or leaving the EU will mean for them and their families, and we have concentrated our information campaign on these key issues. For this reason, the CEC decided not to ally GMB to any of the formal remain campaigns, which involved cross party and/or business interests that do not reflect the views of our members. Former Marks & Spencer boss Stuart Rose of the Stronger in Europe campaign is no friend of our members.
- 2.5 The CEC has major concerns about the bias being shown in the media, including the BBC, towards the Leave campaign, with the 10 o'clock news looking like the Boris Johnson road show.

3. Jobs and employment rights and protections

- 3.1 Many of the rights we've fought for over the years are guaranteed in European law - the right to paid holidays, parental leave, information and consultation, a wealth of health and safety legislation, environmental protections, laws that combat discrimination on a range of levels, and the right for part-time, fixed term and temporary workers to be treated equally. The need to protect and promote these rights is raised in many of the European motions to Congress. When we see the Tories attacking the very roots of our ability as a trade union to represent our members when they need us, we are glad we have the protection of EU law behind us.
- 3.2 The CEC recognises the concerns raised in so many of the motions to Congress that our members are very worried about the risks to their jobs if we leave the EU, and the wider effect this will have on UK trade and exports, investment and our economy across all sectors. Though no one can predict how many jobs will be at risk, TUC research and the

consensus of most respected economists is that the threats to the manufacturing and service sectors alike could be considerable.

- 3.3 The CEC emphasises that the current threat to many of our jobs in Britain is not because of EU action, but because this Conservative Government consistently fails to support and protect British jobs and industry. It is the UK Government that is blocking stronger EU trade anti-dumping measures, and is the cheerleader for China to have Market Economy Status whilst the rest of Europe wants to stop this. It is David Cameron, not the EU, who is robbing our members in Tata Steel, in ceramics and other manufacturing industries of their jobs, and, if we are outside the EU, he will continue to sell our jobs to the highest bidder. The government needs to invest in protecting and promoting our manufacturing, financial and service industries.
- 3.4 The Tory Government is divisively making a scapegoat of migrant workers, attacking the victims of exploitation rather than those who exploit and undercut terms and conditions. It is the Tories who are opposing stronger EU rules to ensure the collectively agreed rate for the job where the work is done, and who give free rein to agencies and employers to actively recruit workers on lower pay and conditions to come to the UK. The Government has the power to stop undercutting in the UK, but is part of the problem not the solution. Its pitiful EU reforms restricting in-work benefits for migrant workers are a distraction from the real issue. If they were paid decent wages they would not require benefits.
- 3.5 Some in the Leave campaign camp argue that if the UK leaves the EU, we will be free of damaging EU trade deals such as the EU-US trade deal (TTIP), and EU Canada deal (CETA) that threaten public services, labour, environmental and product standards. This is true, but sadly, under the current Government, they would be replaced with even worse deals from a desperate, isolated government willing to accept wholesale deregulation and privatisation of public services, and ready to go the whole way with the US on their anti-trade union "*right to work*" agenda. The CEC reminds Congress that UKIP are as pro unfettered free trade as the Tories, and Nigel Farage is a former commodities trader who

will never change his spots. GMB has led UK trade union opposition to these trade deals, and is actively involved with EU trade unions in campaigning for the deals to be rejected and for future EU trade deals to put people not corporations first.

- 3.6 GMB has long called for tax dodgers to be taken to task, and commends the European Parliament and Labour MEPs who have been at the forefront of tackling this issue with us. The Luxleaks and Panama scandals show that this Tory Government and the business interests it protects are up to their necks in avoiding paying their fair share whilst the rest of us are squeezed until the pips squeak. Cameron and Boris Johnson are what stands between a ban on tax havens and proper regulation of the banking and financial sector, not the EU.

4. Solidarity v divide and rule

- 4.1 GMB has its roots in international solidarity. Will Thorne and Eleanor Marx knew the importance for workers to unite in their struggle to counter the attempts of employers and governments to divide and rule, and set worker against worker. They helped support trade union organisation across Europe, the United States and across the globe. The CEC emphasises that the importance of that trade union solidarity is no less relevant to our members today than it was over 125 years ago.
- 4.2 The CEC also recognises the vital role that the EU has had in maintaining peace in Europe for over half a century, testament to its purpose when it was borne out of the ashes of the Second World War. Some seek to argue this is no longer a relevant argument for remaining in the EU, but when we see the resurgence of intolerance and far-right parties across Europe we realise how fragile peace remains.
- 4.3 Trade unionists and people across Europe value the bond and solidarity they have long had with British people. Whilst they recognise it is for us to decide our future in the EU, they do not want to lose us. They struggle to understand why so many in the UK believe that Britain is dominated by “Brussels” or the EU, because they know that Britain has

wielded major influence and power in defining the direction of the EU.

5. What happens on 24th June if we are outside the EU?

- 5.1 This is sadly a question that the Leave camp are not prepared to answer. With the referendum only a few weeks away, successive polls are showing that the outcome of the vote is too close to call, at 50% neck and neck, but the CEC is concerned that few people are actually thinking about the day after.
- 5.2 The IMF and Bank of England have warned of a recession, rating agencies believe that the UK credit rating would go down, and there are fears that the UK leaving would trigger a wider recession across the EU, begging the question - who will buy our exports regardless of higher trade tariffs? All siren voices are attacked by the Leave campaign, yet no solid arguments are given to counter these predictions. The pound has already significantly decreased in value against the Euro with the threat of leaving.
- 5.3 The CEC has major concerns for the future of the United Kingdom, where our members in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have a high level of trade and economic dependency between them and with the rest of Britain, and maintaining peace and economic security is paramount. The SNP continue to hold the threat of a second independence referendum if a leave vote in England threatens to take them out of the EU, and Wales has voiced similar concerns.
- 5.4 Britain and the rest of Europe is still dealing with the devastation of the economic and social crisis, and the crushing austerity and cuts forced on our members and millions of others across Europe. We want to see an alternative path for a social Europe that puts people first, not a path that leads to further economic and social insecurity.

6. Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above the CEC recommends that:

- Congress supports this CEC Statement, recognising that the jobs, rights and interests of our members and their families are likely to be better protected by remaining a part of the EU.
- Congress agrees that, if the UK votes to remain in the EU, *business as usual* for the EU is not an option, and that urgent measures are necessary to re-establish the social Europe we were promised.
- Congress endorses a GMB “Angry Yes” campaign to remain in a reformed EU that works for our members and puts people before business.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Bill Modlock to move the CEC Statement on the EU Referendum and Cath Sutton to second.

BRO. B. MODLOCK (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and moving the CEC Statement on The EU Referendum.

Congress, GMB members and voters across Britain face a monumental decision on 23rd June that will affect not only this generation but the lives of our children and grandchildren. The importance of the EU referendum cannot be under-estimated, and the CEC believes that it has a duty to ensure that GMB members were able to make an informed decision on the basis of facts rather than myths, and to understand what this vote will mean for their jobs, rights at work and the future strength of the British economy. GMB members are rightly concerned about this issue, highlighted by the number of motions submitted to this Congress. It was, therefore, decided that it should be the subject of a CEC Statement. GMB has long been active in promoting and protecting our members’ interests at the EU level as companies and economies become increasingly global, but GMB has never been an apologist for the EU. We know it is not perfect and, yes, it needs reforming because for too long the social dimension of Europe has been playing second fiddle to business interests and, frankly, enough is enough. However, walking away and leaving the EU is not the answer. There is simply too much at risk. That’s why the CEC recommended in February that GMB should campaign on the position of an “angry Yes” to remain in the EU, but to continue to fight for a Europe that works for our members, putting people before business interests. This is the recommendation that the GMB Statement makes to Congress today. A number of campaigns have mushroomed in the past year, many of them cross-party and cross-interest groups, and none of them really speak for the concerns of our members. For this reason, GMB decided not to ally itself to any campaign and has concentrated on providing our own information campaign for our members, focusing on the issues that we know concern them. Many of the rights and protections we have fought for over the years are guaranteed in European law, such as paid holidays, parental leave, health and safety protections, anti-discrimination laws, rules to ensure equality and equal pay. Our members want to keep these rights, but we know that they are not safe in Tory hands if we are outside of the EU.

Just look at the Trade Union Bill — the Tory Trade Union Bill — if you need any confirmation of that. Congress motions show that our members are very worried about the risk to their jobs if we leave the EU, and the impact this will have more widely on the economy, exports and our ability to trade. The Referendum has stirred insecurity. None of us know for sure which jobs and how many will be at risk but we feel in our stomachs that the threat exists. Research by the TUC and other respected economics indicate that the risk is considerable.

Our concerns are even greater, because we have a Tory Government that doesn't care about jobs and industries. Whilst cheap Chinese steel, ceramics and other products are devastating our manufacturing base, this Government is playing cheerleader for China to be given market-economy status, and is blocking EU-trade defence measures. So whose side are they on? I think we know the answer to that one.

Throughout this campaign the Government have divisively made a scapegoat of migrant workers, attacking the victims of exploitation rather than those who exploit and undercut terms and conditions. It is the Tories, not the EU, who are opposing stronger EU rules to ensure the collectively agreed rate for the job where the work is done, and allowing agencies and employers to actively recruit workers into the UK on lower pay and conditions. Congress, the Government have the power to stop undercutting in the UK. What it lacks is the will. GMB has its roots in international solidarity. Will Thorne and Elena Marx knew that only by uniting in their struggle could workers across Europe gain rights and protections and stop attempts by employers and governments to set worker against worker. The CEC emphasises that the importance of trade union solidarity is no less relevant to our members today than it was 125 years ago. Furthermore, the vital role the EU has played in maintaining peace in Europe for over 70 years cannot be ignored. When we see the rise of intolerance and far-right parties across Europe, we realise how fragile the peace remains.

We have an important decision ahead of us. Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage have made theatre of the referendum campaign, but don't be fooled. It is deadly serious. The CEC knows that Europe can do better for our members, and we will make sure that it does.

The CEC recommends to Congress, firstly, to support this CEC Statement on the EU Referendum, recognising that jobs and the interests of our members are better protected by remaining part of the EU. Secondly, it agrees that should we remain in Europe, business as usual is not an option. The top priority is re-establishing the social Europe that we were promised. Lastly, it endorses the GMB "angry Yes" campaign to remain in a reformed EU that works for our members. I move.

SIS. C. SUTTON (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, seconding the CEC Statement on the EU Referendum. Congress, we all know what a big decision the EU Referendum is for all of us, and I am glad that the CEC has decided to have a statement and a full debate on this crucial issue. Several of us in this hall are not voting on the question for the first time, but a lot has changed since we first asked in 1973. Back then most of the trade union Movement and the Labour Party were anti-EU, and it was the Tories leading the charge. Jacques Delors

came to the TUC Congress in 1988 and called on us to join in the shaping of a social Europe or risk being washed away by the tide. So we got stuck in and managed to develop a bag full of new EU rights and protections for our members. I am proud to say that these included important equal-treatment rights, women's maternity rights, protection from harassment and discrimination, as well as all the other rights that Bill has already mentioned. I don't know about you, but I'm not about to let any Tory take them off me. Whilst the trade unions have united across Europe in the common social cause, the Tories have torn themselves apart, and in their disarray they have taken the blame, so that is another fine mess they have got us into. We have spent too much time in recent years fighting to hold on to these important employment rights that we worked so hard for. With business and many governments trying to form an exclusive corporate club in the EU, the GMB is calling time on that. If we remain in the EU after the referendum vote, it will be thanks to our members and trade union unionists across the UK, not David Cameron, and "business as usual" just went off the menu. We want an EU that keeps the promises it made to our members and to put people before profits. The GMB is facing a fight that we are going to take all the way, so please support the CEC recommendation in this Statement and vote to remain in the EU on 23rd June, and let's get this EU show back on the road. I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Cath. Congress, I will, firstly, call the regions who withdrew their motions, namely, Southern Region, Birmingham and Wales & South West.

BRO. G. LEWIS (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate. (Applause)
Congress, I am a young guy and I am just starting out on life. I am from the Brussels branch. I work in the EU. Yes, you might even call me one of those faceless Brussels' bureaucrats that we keep hearing about. But, do you know what else? I'm a Yorkshireman. I've lived in Manchester, my dad is Welsh and my mum's from Derbyshire. Yes, I now live in Brussels, but I don't think that makes me any less British than anyone of those sat in the Brexit camp. With my future and the future of every single young person in this country on the line, I have some things to say. This is my future we are toying with here, a future full of rights, a future of opportunities, a future of security. This vote will decide what sort of country I will belong to for the rest of my life, and what sort of country do I want? I want a country of clean air and clean waters. I want a country where it doesn't matter to me whether my doctor is French or Indian, Polish or Welsh. I want an open country, an inclusive country. This vote is more than about open borders or closed borders, migrants or no migrants. It will shape who we are as a people, and who are we? Are we a people who see our new neighbours from overseas as a friend and not a threat? Are we a people who sees the suffering in the Mediterranean as an outrage rather than wash our hands of it? Are we a people who commits themselves to that unwritten rule that we will give our children more than we ourselves received? I think we are. Rights, education, travel, a cleaner world, broader horizons and better opportunities are the life chances that I have had because of the European Union, and they are the opportunities that your children and grand children deserve, too. Who can promise me this future? The Brexiteers, who want to drag us back to a golden era of isolation, low pay and opportunities not for the many but for the few. It's my future, it's your future, it's not their future. It is a future that we need to choose together.

As EU citizens the rights that we hold are the birthright of every single one of us in this room and every single person in this country. On June 23rd they are going to try and take that away from me, from all of us. Don't let them. (*Applause*)

BRO. I. PRICE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I speak in support of the CEC Statement on the EU Referendum. I am going to speak in support of an “angry Remain” vote in the EU Referendum, but, first, I, very quickly, want to say that it was a humbling experience at my first Congress yesterday thanks to the values of our union and the friends it keeps, to listen to and to subsequently shake the hands of Sue Roberts and Margaret Aspinall from the Hillsborough Family Support Group. What an inspiration those two women's grit, determination and integrity was.

On the EU, I imagine that some of you, like me, will not have had particularly strong views on it until recently. When I joined the GMB four-and-a-half years ago I was much more concerned about jobs and working conditions in Block Switch. What, on the surface, does that do with Brussels and the EU? It's a lot of the things that we take for granted: maternity leave, paternity leave, paid holidays, rights for agency workers and much of our health and safety legislation stems from or is underpinned by the EU. Since Cameron announced his plans for an in/out referendum, I have given thought to how I'd vote, and I confess that I'm not a committed Europhile, but I'm very concerned that we could lose those rights. Would the Brexiteers really scrap all of this? Well, I don't know, and in fact no one knows but would anyone here confidently predict that Johnson, Gove, Farage and their ilk wouldn't at least try? Just look at their record on the Trade Union Bill. I have no idea what the Brexit camp are offering because their message changes seemingly every day. The idea that Johnson, Gove, Fox & co, and other right-wing Tories would plough their grossly-inflated, alleged savings into reinvigorating our NHS would be, quite frankly, laughable if it was not so cynical.

The EU is far from perfect, as we have heard. It has lost some of the social direction it had many years ago, and the looming threat of TTIP is a legitimate concern for many trade unionists, particularly those of us who work in the public sector. But I've learnt just how many of our hard-won rights are underpinned by EU legislation, and that's why, even with these concerns, being in the EU, pushing our message, in a bid to improve things and build on the aspects we already benefit from, is crucial. I, therefore, find myself in full agreement with the position of supporting an “angry Remain” vote, and I urge you all to support it, too.

Congress, on behalf of Birmingham & West Midlands, as a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker, I commend this Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. GMB Wales & South Western Region.

BRO. P. HUNT (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement on the EU Referendum. President and Congress, let's be clear from the start that life outside the European Union will be worse for working people in Britain left to the mercy of the Tory Government. However, the Statement recognises that it is difficult for us to encourage our members to vote remain, many of who have strong opinions, but we don't want to be seen to be coming down on the side of a Prime Minister responsible for the Government's attacks on trade unions.

The Statement, correctly, does not commend voting simply for the status quo. Urgent reform is, of course, needed, but it is vital that we focus upon the positive message of a vision of a better Europe and the crucial benefits that membership brings in terms of jobs and rights.

We must emphasise how the result might impact upon jobs, our public services, our pension, wages, employment rights and what solution would be more likely to create the kind of progressive society that we, our members and working people would support.

Yes, the dream of a true social Europe upon which our hopes and aims have been pinned has proven to be difficult to realise, and some of the measures taken in the aftermath of the euro crisis have taken the EU in the opposite direction. We have to campaign, however, for Britain to remain in Europe because of the jobs, growth, investment, protection for British workers and consumers who depend on our membership. Congress, our members can make the difference in this campaign. My region supports this Statement. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak in this debate?

SIS. D. MILLS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement on the EU Referendum. I want to make three important points in support of this statement. Firstly, we must recognise that the EU has given our members various legislative rights, which must be defended at all costs. The Tories will have no qualms about sweeping these rights aside if we vote to leave. Secondly, we are not advocating remaining in the EU for the benefit of big businesses and the bosses. We know that the EU needs to be reformed to re-establish a social agenda for the benefit of ordinary citizens and members. Finally, we must encourage all of our GMB members to vote from an informed position to remain in the EU. An “angry Yes”, but a yes that will benefit our members. Please support the Statement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. B. CARSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am speaking in the CEC debate on Europe. President and Congress, GMB Scotland welcomes the CEC Statement on the EU Referendum. We are currently enjoying the entertainment spectacle of the Tories split, with the warring factions accusing each other of misleading the electorate. Mind you, we have been saying this about the Tories for over a century. It has only taken a hundred years for them to confirm what we have been saying about them for all these decades. Don't believe any of them. It is just a shame that it is on an issue that is vital to our members and the future of our country. The GMB has a long-standing policy in favour of the UK membership of the EU. That said, over a number of years the policy has been qualified, with the EU increasingly focused on the free-market competition at the expense of the social protections, including workers', consumers' and environmental rights. Alongside that long-standing policy, we also have a long-standing demand for workers' rights, with social-justice issues being given equal rating to pursue the economic growth and the priorities of the EU. So the much-quoted bonfire of the EU regulations would be a disaster for trade union members and workers in general across the country. *(Applause)* That's why GMB Scotland welcomes the CEC Statement confirming our position of an “angry Yes” to

remain and not to get involved with my cross-party campaigners, who have no priorities for our members. Support the CEC Statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Brenda.

BRO. M. HINCHLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am with the rowdy lot at the back. (*Cheers*) This is Europe's final countdown. I am one of the in-crowd, speaking in support of staying part of the Union, that's the European Union. I intend to stick to the facts and keep the message simple and clear. First of all, I would like to dispel some of the urban myths surrounding what would happen if we left the EU. Cameron and his cronies have told us that if we left the EU we would be a rudderless ship sailing into the abyss.

Fact. I'm sorry, but if you sail past Portugal after the referendum it is impossible to fall off the end of the Earth because it is round. Cameron and his cronies have told us that if we left the EU we would be heading for World War III. The Conservatives have decimated our Armed Forces over the preceding years. We do not have many troops left in the Army now, and certainly not enough to fight a world war. We have a number of fighter jets flying in the air at the moment but they can't land because the bloody aircraft carriers are still in bits. Cameron's cronies have told us that if we lose the EU, immigration will be out of control and we would be swamped with unwanted incomers. Immigration has been a very grey area in this campaign. Immigration is like cholesterol. There is good immigration, which incidentally keeps our essential services running, and then there is bad immigration by those who enter illegally and want to cause us harm. The out camp negated their own argument because if we leave they say that we will become a more prosperous nation. Will that not attract more illegal immigrants?

Some of you will be uncomfortable and find it impossible to vote on the same side as the Conservatives, but I'll let you into a little secret. Dangerous Dave and his cronies do not really want to stay. They would rather go it alone. I say this because when you listen to the rhetoric, he says that he wants to be part of a reformed Europe, and he is not talking bananas. The red tape he wants to get rid of is basic human rights for workers, health and safety, holiday pay, maternity and paternity pay, and the biggest one of all is our trade union rights that our forefathers fought for.

Barack Obama also got in on the act recently by saying that we won't get a piece of the American pie if we leave Europe. Now, I'm a big fan of Obama and I also like Ali G, but I'm not sure that we should take anything that America says seriously because they are about to elect a bodily function as a leader of the free world. (*Applause and laughter*) Like his Congress, he is split into three camps. There are the "Yes, we will stay in the group", there are the "No, we want to leave the group", and there is a group in the middle playing Euro hokey-cokey, who will decide the outcome of this referendum. The ones amongst you who are undecided will hear something positive about Europe on Monday, and you'll put your left leg in. By teatime, you will have heard the reverse argument and your left leg will be out. I'm a believer in people in this, and I can tell you that it's okay to be undecided, but on the day you'll have to make your mind up, so listen to what the old wise owls on the table are saying. They know what they are doing.

THE PRESIDENT: Less of the bloody “old”! (*Laughter*)

BRO. HINCHLIFFE: Every vote is vital in this referendum. So from the streets of London to the Mull of Kintyre, we need to get people out there voting. The European Union is the biggest trade union in the world. It is even bigger than Unite. So tell me, because I believe we have trade unionism running through our veins, would we not want to remain part of that organisation. If it is jobs for my generation and the next, then vote to stay. If you want a stable economy, then vote to stay. If you truly believe in trade unionism, then vote to stay. Let’s stay together. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that is the group but to be fair does anyone wish to speak against? Yes, come on then.

A DELEGATE: Colleagues, I am speaking on my own behalf and without the support of my region. Before you shoot me, I am not actually speaking against the CEC recommendations, I just want to raise a concern from a personal point of view. Like the lady before me this is my second time round as well for a referendum. I had my doubts on that occasion and my doubts were whether we were going to finish up with the United States of Europe as opposed to a group of sovereign nations within Europe. I was assured by senior members of a certain party that I will not mention that it was just trade, the Common Market I was voting on. Very shortly after the referendum it changed its name and then changed it again, and then we had Maastricht and I am afraid my worries about the United States of Europe have certainly not gone away. I just wanted to raise that caution with my fellow delegates when we are considering our vote.

One thing I am certain of, whichever way you vote you must get out and vote. It is the most important vote we have had a chance to take part in, ever, I think. Urge your members to get out and vote whichever way their conscience calls them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I am now going to put the Statement to Congress. All those in favour please show. All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

The CEC Statement on the EU Referendum was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to 14, and ask London Region to move 200, and London to move 201. While they are coming to the rostrum, the choice you have to make, Congress, do you wish to have a lunch break (“*No, No.*”) Or do you wish to carry on? (“*Yes.*”)

**POLITICAL: EUROPEAN UNION
SAY NO TO BREXIT
MOTION 200**

200. SAY NO TO BREXIT

Congress is extremely concerned that “Cameron’s Folly” the in or out referendum called to placate his UKIP wing, could lead to the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union, with the potential of a massive loss of employment, inward investment, international isolation and the possible break-up of the United Kingdom.

Despite the many claims made by the Eurosceptics, there has been no audit or if there has been they have kept it secret of the impact that leaving the EU will have on lost jobs and inward investment, not only for manufacturing but also for financial and service industries.

We would most certainly be excluded from all joint EU ventures and if we were still to trade with Europe it would be on their terms.

Nobody claims there cannot be improvements of some bureaucracy but that is different from some of the belligerence and stance of some of the anti's.

As a trade union our priority must be to protect current employment and the employment prospects for those yet to enter the jobs market together with the various forms of employment and Health and Safety protection we currently enjoy but which would be all at the mercy of the Tory right-wing should we leave the EU.

With this in mind, and to protect what we have Congress asks the CEC to join with other Unions, the TUC and the Labour Party to mount a vigorous campaign to remain as part of the European Union.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. GOODSON (London): Congress, we now have two weeks until the country decides its long-term future. The London Region fully endorses the CEC Statement so as a union we have a clear and indisputable mandate to campaign to say no to Brexit and to secure a Remain vote. Our General Secretary has made it clear that we campaign on the back of an angry remain agenda so that those issues at the top of our agenda, jobs and employment rights, are protected and, of course, keep the protection of the hard fought health and safety legislation.

Colleagues, be in no doubt that Brexit will give the green light to the Tories to rip up all of these laws and send our members back to the Dark Ages. I move. *(Applause)*

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

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you moving 201?

BRO. A. LAW (London): No, I am seconding 200. I can formally go away!

THE PRESIDENT: Go on.

BRO. A. LAW (London): Congress, if we were to leave the EU a lot of so-called politicians would have won, all the scaremongering would have worked, all the true facts are simple that all workers' rights would become non-existent. The Conservative Government are dismissing our rights as I speak. We would be working with new health and safety rules, new terms and conditions, absolutely no rights whatsoever. Cameron has pushed for business interests to dominate over workers' interests in the EU referendum. We would be back to the Victorian times as we already know that this government is taking us down that road. Our best place is to

fight for workers' rights in the EU. The EU are the ones that bring workers' rights to the forefront. The current government are continually taking our rights away from all of us. With all the talk of business not being able to trade with other businesses in the EU or not, no one has mentioned what happens to our children's prospects. They are our future. A lot of businesses will fall by the wayside as they will not be able to complete on a level playing field, jobs will go; it will all become a vicious circle. As I say, it is all talk about what is good for business, instead of what is good for our people, our members, our families, and in years to come their families. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. London, will you stop trying to confuse me. I am confused enough.

Right, will those who have bought the raffle tickets for the Jeremy Corbyn signed T-shirt, numbers 145, 76 and 131, will you go and pick your prize up from the stall, please.

Can I have the movers of 201, London Region.

EU REFERENDUM FOR OR AGAINST? MOTION 201

201. EU REFERENDUM FOR OR AGAINST?

This Congress believes that the only proper place for Britain is within the European Economic Community.

Economically millions of British jobs depend on our membership of the EU; British businesses rely on the EU for £227 billion of exports each year.

LUTON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. G. GRIFFITHS (London): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Madam President, Congress, I can well remember back in 1974 deciding that Britain should be a member of the Common Market. The changes in the Common Market and the advent of the European Union have strengthened my views. It is my firm conviction that this union should do all in its power to secure a remain vote on the 23rd. The reasons for my stance are several and complicated but I will try to précis them in the time allowed to me.

Firstly, colleagues, jobs and the economy: the EU is the world's largest single market and over 3 million jobs are a result of our trade with the EU. For every pound we put in, we get back almost £10 through increased trade, jobs, and investment. 200,000 UK firms trade with the EU giving rise to a constant source of employment. The TTIP Agreement is of concern but even if we left the EU we would be bound by it and by leaving we will have no chance to influence it.

Moving on to crime and security, the European arrest warrants gives us the ability to arrest and extradite criminals and fugitives throughout the EU. A Brexit would see

this safeguard lost and accordingly UK citizens would be less safe when travelling or working abroad.

Then, colleagues, there is the environment. The air over our heads is not exclusively British. It is the same air as in France and Germany, and in Greece. It is being polluted daily. The EU is doing more than any other body to secure legislation for lower carbon emissions. Britain should be part of that.

Then as trade unionists we move on to rights. Trade union rights have suffered under Thatcher and Major and, shamefully, they were not restored under Blair. All the rights we have to holidays, maternity and paternity leave, are down to EU directives. Equality and human rights are a result of EU legislation. If we leave, we lose these overnight.

Colleagues, the Brexit argument relies purely on immigration problems, which is the stance of *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail*, and other right-wing propaganda. Britain attracts immigrants, it has done for centuries. The Huguenots in 16th century, the Jews, the Ugandan Asians, and other suppressed people all sought refuge here. They came here not to scrounge but to survive and to work and make better lives for their families. Colleagues, in doing so they have benefited the finances of this country. There may well be logistical problems in dealing with increased immigration but let's deal with it as the country we are and not the country Rupert Murdoch would have us be.

Congress, the vote on 23rd June will define our country; it will define it for the present and for the future. It will affect security, jobs, prosperity, rights and opportunities for generations. The future of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, is in the hands of the UK electorate. I call on this union to do everything possible to ensure the views of the right-wing press are overcome and to persuade the great British public to vote remain. Madam President, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gwyneth, well done. Secunder.

SIS. F. FRANKLIN (London): Congress, as a trade unionist I feel it is imperative that this country votes remain on 23rd June. The claims and wilder claims, and even wilder claims, counterclaims, on both sides are frankly laughable. The sight of Conservatives tearing themselves apart is of no immediate good to Labour. The best thing as a trade unionist to have come out of the EU is human rights and workers' rights, rights no self-respecting Tory government would have granted had it not come from EU directives.

Colleagues, if this country votes to leave on 23rd June, there will be a systemic shift in British politics. It will not probably mean a general election but it probably will spell the end of Cameron and Osborne. Great, you may say, but is it? Cameron and Osborne are bad enough. Let's say the country is ruled by Johnson, Gove, Duncan Smith, without the restraints of the EU. We all know what will happen then. It will mean a complete end to workers' rights, a complete end to human rights, and then statutory annual leave, and then maternity and paternity leave, and then employment tribunals and an end to the NHS, an end to the welfare state.

Colleagues, things will be so bad that you will think the current Trade Union Bill had been written by Florence Nightingale. Congress, for our members please ensure a remain vote. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I now put 200 and 201 to the vote. London has voted to accept the Statement. I am assuming that still stands. Is that correct? (*Agreed*) Yes. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you.

Motion 200 was CARRIED.

Motion 201 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Social Policy: General. We are nearly there. I call the movers of 214, Birmingham, 215, London, 217, Yorkshire, 223, London, and 228, Northern.

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL
SUPERMARKET FOOD WASTE
MOTION 214**

214. SUPERMARKET FOOD WASTE

This Conference calls upon GMB to campaign against the food wasted by supermarkets. The BBC and Channel 4 both revealed that the big four supermarket chains waste a total of 300,000 tonnes of food a year but only Sainsbury's have revealed its figures publicly.

Tesco, Asda and Morrison's are constantly boasting about their green credentials. Food waste management is a very important sustainability indicator, so why not reveal it.

Food waste is generally considered to have a damaging effect on the **environment**; a reduction in food waste is considered critical if the UK is to meet obligations under the **European Landfill Directive** to reduce biodegradable waste going to landfill and favourable considering **international targets** on climate change, limiting **greenhouse gas emissions**. When disposed of in landfill, food waste releases **methane**, a relatively damaging greenhouse gas and **leachate**, a **toxin** capable of considerable **groundwater pollution**. The food supply chain accounts for a fifth of UK **carbon emissions**; the production, storage and transportation of food to homes requires large amounts of energy. The effects of stopping food waste that can potentially be prevented has been likened to removing one in five cars from UK roads. More and more low income households are reliant on charities and food banks and so this food waste could be given to them to help these families. By campaigning this would highlight the problem and maybe shame the supermarkets into doing the right thing and not wasting good food.

C80 DUDLEY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Referred)

BRO. G. RICHARDS (Birmingham & West Midlands): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Good afternoon, everyone. I am a union rep for Refuse and Waste Management at Dudley Council. Dudley has a population of approximately 313,000 people and is the 25th largest government district in England. As a bin man

supermarket waste is a matter close to my heart, a matter that I would really like to see us, the GMB, campaigning against.

The first thing that concerns me with supermarket waste, and I am sure it will be the same for most of us here, is that it is arguably immoral for supermarkets to waste and throw away such vast amounts of food, in particular food close to the “best before” expiry when nearly 9,750,000 people are living in poverty in the UK.

One of my other concerns is the unnecessary and irreparable damage that supermarkets food waste in practice is doing to our planet and the environment in which we live. Here are just a few interesting facts I would like to share with you all. In the UK alone we waste between 18 and 20 million tons of food annually and for every one ton of food waste thrown away needlessly that one ton is responsible for approximately 4.5 tons of CO2 emissions. At present, there is no obligation on supermarkets to reveal the amount of food waste they are throwing away. The Courtauld Commitment is only a voluntary pledge that calls for a reduction in the waste of grocery products and the packaging by 3% from within the supply chain. Here is a fact I do enjoy, the irrigation water that is used globally to grow the food that we waste would be enough for the domestic needs of about 9 billion people. That is the number of people estimated to be on the planet by 2050. Finally, between 20 and 40% of UK fruit and vegetables are rejected, even before they reach the shops, mostly because they do not match the supermarkets’ excessively strict cosmetic standards.

Recently, Channel 4 and the BBC revealed that the Big Four supermarket chains are wasting around 300,000 tons of food every year, with only Sainsbury having publicly revealed its waste figures. I believe supermarkets should be made to reveal their waste figures and where not already doing so discarded food should be donated to charities, soup kitchens, food banks, and the like. I believe that this would dramatically reduce the unnecessary amount of food waste going to landfill which then goes on to release unnecessary amounts of extra methane gas into our atmosphere.

I call upon GMB to campaign against food wasted by supermarkets in the hope that one day soon the UK will follow in the footsteps of France, who earlier this year became the first country in the world to pass law banning supermarkets from throwing away or destroying unsold food and forcing those supermarkets to give those foods to charity and food banks instead. I move. *(Applause)*

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

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: 215, to be moved by London.

**5p CARRIER BAGS
MOTION 215**

215. 5p CARRIER BAGS

This Conference says when the charge of 5p for plastic carrier bags by the Government; it was to reduce the usage within Supermarkets. Now it is in all types of shops.

Conference says how can it be correct when buying clothing, bed linen etc. one has to pay 5p which is advertising the merchant's name.

We the GMB seek for the introduction of the old fashioned paper carrier bags as the likes of Primark are using.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. HAMBLIN (London): Moving Motion 215, as the motion says 5p plastic bags were meant for supermarkets, now it can be in any shop. Also, depending on the size of the bag there are different charges. Congress, I ask you to support this motion by the promotion of the old-fashioned carrier bags. Secondly, it is not so long back if I could be seen leaving a shop with goods in your hands or hanging over my arms, I would get a tap on my shoulder and escorted away by police. Congress, please support this motion, being a first time delegate and a first time speaker. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Heather. Secunder.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, however trivial you may think this resolution is, there are some implications. One, the 5ps or whatever the charge can be and I have know them up to 50p, that money is supposed to go to charity but how many shops do you see where they are advertising and got a notice up as to what charity they are supporting. Also, there is a loophole, all that money does not go to charity. They can take out their expenses so I doubt very much whether any money will go to charity.

Secondly, we as GMB support all kinds of persons, from the richest, you might as well say, down to the poorest and outside this hall we have seen the gentleman, as I will call him, the Big Issue seller, ask him, can he afford to pay for a carrier bag to put his shopping in? He would not even be able to afford to buy his groceries yet alone paying for a shopping bag. Please support this resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. 217, Support for the Arts, Yorkshire to move.

**SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS
MOTION 217**

217. SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

This Conference condemns this government's attitude towards the arts. As a result of austerity, libraries, museums, galleries and theatres have had reduced funding and closures. Works of art have been sold, mainly to private collectors. The attacks and shackling of the BBC will cause detrimental changes to the variety and quality of the Corporation's output.

These are all blatant attacks on the idea of arts for all. The last government in Western Europe to restrict the arts was Nazi Germany.

Conference calls for an increase in arts funding, to enable more people to have access, to participate in and, to appreciate all types of art. The announcement of Jeremy Corbyn that he would support an increase in arts funding if he were to become Prime Minister is a step in the right direction. We call on the current Prime Minister to follow suit.

PARKGATE BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): *(Cheers)* President, Congress, from the work of the WEA to giving free access to national museums and galleries, this great movement of ours should be proud of what it has done to enrich the lives through Art for All. With government cuts forcing the closure of libraries, theatres, galleries, museums, those citadels of culture and knowledge that keep us from barbarism, we have to fight to stop this sceptred isle, this blessed plot, from becoming an artistic and cultural backwater. In his leadership campaign Jeremy Corbyn, comrades, pledged a future Labour government to give an opportunity for all to partake in the arts. The present government is doing the exact opposite. Policies of high tuition fees and austerity are reducing those opportunities.

Whilst starving a garret is no guarantee of success, the arts, and increasingly the performing arts, are becoming an exclusively middle-class career option. Nicky Morgan and John Whittingdale between them are destroying access to Lifelong Learning and Arts for All, things championed by the widow of Aneurin Bevan, the late great Jenny Lee, by the Open University, and as chair of the Arts Council. The 1945 Labour government, as president of the Board of Trade, Harold Wilson stimulated the British film industry causing it to have a bit of a golden age and also making it a training ground for future talent. In contrast our Chancellor, George Osborne, has just made the film industry another tax dodge for the rich.

With the Tory Murdoch love-in, with ministers openly anti-BBC, and pressurising it to become the Tories propaganda ministry, and wanting to privatise Channel 4, public broadcasting is in peril. Public service broadcasting, including, comrades, a vibrant independent impartial BBC, is essential to ensure a variety of programmes appealing to both mass audiences and minority interests.

Just on a personal note, comrades, for introducing me to the guilty pleasures of the historian Lucy Worsley, and surprisingly because I can hardly speak English, the French singer, Zaz, plus Saturday nights of Dr. Who and Match of the Day, for me I am fairly sure it has fulfilled its remit to inform, educate, and entertain.

When 10cc sang the lines, "Art for arts sake, money for gods sake," they inadvertently summed up the difference between how we see the arts and how the Tories see the arts. We value art for its beauty, its passion, and its indefinable qualities. They only see its monetary value. Comrades, access to the arts is as important as free healthcare and jobs for all. With a country awash with money, although it is in the wrong hands, we can have all three. Just as we defend the NHS,

comrades, just as we defend jobs, support this motion, support the arts, defend arts for all. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder.

BRO. G. LINDARS-HAMMOND (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am a first time delegate, first time speaker, and from Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. (*Applause*) I am a proud GMB Labour councillor in the City of Sheffield and funding of the arts is something that has been really, really struggled with. For some of my colleagues, this was not really a difficult decision. For them, and I do not for one moment doubt their good intentions, has been, shut the museum, charge for the gallery, and let theatres stand on their own. But, Congress, I think this is wrong. This Government does not just seek to cut our social security and slash our services and kill our members' jobs, but it also seeks to deny cultural access for working people. Congress, as the workers of this nation we deserve access to culture and the arts to inform, educate, and entertain. If the Government do not fund the arts in the UK, we will lose some of the dignity that we as trade unionists have fought for. Just to finish, Congress, can I quote a great socialist, William Morris. He said: "Beauty, which is what is meant by art, using the word in its widest sense, is, I contend, no mere accident to human life, which people can take or leave as they choose, but a positive necessity of life." Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. 223, The Feminist Library, London to move.

THE FEMINIST LIBRARY MOTION 223

223. THE FEMINIST LIBRARY

Congress notes the Feminist Library is a large collection of Women's Liberation Movement literature based in London. It has been supporting research, campaigning, activism and community projects since 1975.

In 2015 the Library celebrated 40 years of archiving and activism, run entirely by volunteers.

In the current climate of austerity, with many community spaces closing, the Feminist Library's future is under threat. Due to rent increases the building that has been its home for 30 years is no longer viable. They now need to raise funds to find a new, permanent and secure home.

2015 has been the 40th anniversary of the Founding of the Feminist Library, and we have launched a campaign to find a new, permanent and secure home to house one of the most important collections of feminist material in the UK, and to continue providing an inspiring learning and social space.

Help with the survival of one of the last women's spaces in London.

Congress agrees to:

- Help in whatever way it can to ensure that the Feminist Library in London continues.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(*Carried*)

SIS. E. HUGHES (London): Good afternoon, President, Congress. How can I follow that, very passionately talking about the arts? Comrades, this week's Congress began with a proud display and presentation of our trade union banners, a celebration of the GMB family, past and present. We applaud our heritage and we remember our heritage, and we remember the trade union and political activists who came before us. Remembering where you started and where you came from is important. It gives you a grounding and an education. It gives you pride and it gives you confidence to fight for your future.

This motion addresses the threat of losing the internationally acclaimed Feminist Library. Put simply, after more than 40 years it faces closure. Founded in 1975, the Feminist Library, situated in London, has become a beacon for women across the world as a depository of all types of feminist archive material, writings, historical tracks, posters, all sorts of things. The Feminist Library provides a space for women to research, to read, to meet, and more importantly to organise. Women's stories are kept here, and over 7,000 books and over 1,500 periodicals that have been sourced globally from the Global Women's Movement. In the Feminist Library you will find individual feminist works, pamphlets, papers, images. For longer than a generation the feminist library has supported feminist activists in community based projects. It is a place to learn, to educate, to safely organise around feminist issues.

I have a quote from an author called Belle Hooks: "There is no door to door education that takes feminist thinking out of elite colleges and off the history page to tell folks, especially women, what it is all about, how and where they can join, how they can learn and transform their lives."

The Tory austerity agenda has seen unprecedented attacks made upon the funding of public education, that is our education in colleges, schools, and in libraries. The Feminist Library is under a serious threat due to an increase in its rent from the local authority, Southwark Council, from £12,000 a year to over £30,000 a year. The Feminist Library was able to secure further funding to remain open until October 2016, after a very vigorously fought political campaign. If the Feminist Library is evicted from its current premises, Southwark Council will not only be guilty of cultural vandalism, but also silencing women.

The Feminist Library is run by a collective of volunteers. It is practically unfunded. The Feminist Library does not belong to any one group in our society. It belongs to all of us. It is our cultural heritage. We call upon Congress to support the movement to prevent in any way it can the closure of the Feminist Library. Our heritage is important. It matters. Congress, I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Elizabeth. Secunder.

BRO. G. BRUNNING (London): Congress, in 2015 the Feminist Library, an inspiring, learning, and safe social space for women, celebrated 40 years of archiving Women's Liberation Movement with a renowned and acknowledged reputation for encouraging and supporting activists involved in feminist research projects is now under threat of closure. We cannot let this extensive and comprehensive resource disappear simply because of the current climate of austerity imposed on Britain by this Government.

We call on the GMB to support actively the Feminist Library in its efforts to secure funding enabling it to find new premises, to home permanently one of the most important and extensive collections of feminist literature in the UK. Please support his very important motion. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gordon. The movers of 228, Northern Region.

REPLICA FOOTBALL SHIRTS MOTION 228

228. REPLICA FOOTBALL SHIRTS

This Conference calls for advertising on replica football shirts sold to under 16 years olds to be banned. Congress notes that Premier League Football clubs in particular change their shirts regularly and sometimes as sponsors change it places increased costs on hard pressed fans. Congress calls for Parliament to investigate replica shirts and to regulate so that fans are not ripped off in an already unregulated industry.

C42 STOCKTON NO.1 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. L. TIMBEY (Northern): President, with your blessing before I speak on this motion, I would like to present our General Secretary with a gift as a souvenir of this motion. He has taken such a lot of interest in this motion at this Congress. He has already mentioned it three times. If Tim would come to the podium? (*Presentation of a football shirt*) And it is in a 5p carrier bag. (*Applause*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: I will not take bribery! Be careful, it might be going home with me for my family.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Best motion of the week, this one.

BRO. L. TIMBEY (Northern): Congress, the constant chopping and changing by Premier League football clubs puts a great strain on the budget of fans. Let's be clear, the Premier League football now more than ever is a big unregulated industry. Hard-pressed fans are already facing increased ticket prices, whopping increases, just to keep up with their favourite team. The constant change in replica shirts puts pressure on families with children to keep up with these latest trends. Congress, I appreciate how difficult it would be to legislate to stop clubs changing their kits. I fully understand that with the size of kids these days many will wear adult shirts before they are even 14 year old. It is a very difficult area. But we need to bring this big unregulated football industry to some kind of order.

Congress, this is not just about Premier League clubs, it is about every football club replica shirt. Even the three home nations that have qualified for the forthcoming Euros the cost of shirts for the Wales team is £55, Northern Ireland similar, and England £60. Chelsea have just launched their 2016/2017 home shirt at a staggering £90. May be that is to pay off Dr. Eva. Who knows?

My own club for next season, their shirt, Sunderland, is priced at £49.99, not bad price for a Premiership club in the North East of England. I applaud the Premier League for setting a price for away fans' tickets this season making travelling to away games a little less expensive. They have set a target of £30 for any away fan. I applaud that. I say to football clubs, let's follow this lead and price all replica shirts at the same affordable price for every fan who ever they support.

In rugby league, replica shirts are priced much lower than football shirts. We question why. Because it is a bigger fan base and they know they can rip more off? I call on football clubs, stop ripping off your fans. Congress. Football is a feeding frenzy. I just do not see how parents and kids should be ripped off when clubs are raking the cash in, billions of pounds coming to clubs in the next few years with the new TV rights with Sky. Please support this and keep wearing your club colours. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Les. I think it is discrimination that he gets a shirt and I don't. Where's my skirt with Tottenham on? Formally? Well done, Billy.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Before I move to the vote, does anyone wish to come in? No? Okay. There is a working party over there! Do you want to come up? Elaine, sorry. Come on, Elaine. You should put your hand up. I cannot see you over there.

SIS. E. DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): Speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 214, 215, where the CEC is seeking reference, and Motions 223 and 228 where the CEC support with a qualification. I shall run through these in turn.

Motion 214 on Supermarket Food Waste. Given the potential impact on GMB members there is a need for a joint approach with the Commercial Services Section. This motion needs further research on both existing practice and the implications of enacting the motion. In addition, we note that a Food Waste Reduction Bill was debated in parliament. This would require supermarkets to reduce their food waste by at least 30% and to enter into agreements with food distribution organisations. We also note that regions have highlighted this as the Real Junk Food project based in Leeds was awarded the Congress Local Gift last year.

Motion 215, the 5p carrier bags, the CEC would seek referral of this motion to check whether any GMB members are involved in manufacture or production of either type of bag. We will also need to check for any comparison on carbon footprint or environmental impact. We should not support one type of bag over another unless there is compelling evidence to do so. In addition, we should not be endorsing another retailer where we do not have members.

On Motion 223, the Feminist Library, in line with our support for libraries in general, we would want to help retain this specialist service. However, it is not clear from the motion what our level of financial commitment might be as the library seems to be facing eviction, relocation, and we would not commit ourselves to a blank cheque.

The qualification is that this request should be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Finally, on Motion 228, on Replica Football Shirts, whilst the motion is well meaning, the constant change in replica shirts puts pressure on families with children to keep up with latest trends. The qualification is that it would be difficult to see how we can legislate to stop clubs changing their shirts. What about where children under 16 wear adult size shirts? The only way to stop this practice would be for consumers to vote with their feet. We are unsure on the reaction from the football industry as money gained from sponsorship plays a large part in a club's finances. The Football Association has clear rules on advertising on their football kits and this excludes alcohol and gambling related sponsors. Also, there are specific guidelines for kits for young players under 18 where they prohibit any advertising which is detrimental to the welfare, health, or general interest of young players or considered inappropriate.

To recap, the CEC is asking you to refer Motions 214 and 215, and support Motions 223 and 228 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Sorry about that. Congress, can I ask Birmingham if they accept reference? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. 215, London, do you accept reference? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. I will take the vote on those first. Congress, both regions accept reference. All in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 214 was REFERRED.

Motion 215 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Support for the Arts, and 223, does London accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Yes. 228, Northern? Agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I put 217, 223, 228, to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 217 was CARRIED.

Motion 223 was CARRIED.

Motion 228 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, somebody left their glasses. I have been using them all morning! (*Laughter*) I left mine back at the hotel. Will the owner of these glasses, who probably cannot read their books now because I have them, please come up or I will leave them in the Congress Office at the back of me. Sorry about that. (*Glasses reclaimed*)

Congress, I now move on. We are nearly there. (*Cheers*) All right. All right. Please can the Regional Secretaries ensure that card voting booklets are left in the Regional red trays at the end of Congress so we can re-use them next year. Could all regions please collect their regional banners where possible; any hanging ones will be returned in due course next year.

Congress, we come to the closing procedures of Congress. We are now commencing the closing procedure of Congress which begins with the Omnibus Vote of Thanks, this year to be given by June Minnery, GMB Scotland. June. (*Applause*)

OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC): Thanks, colleagues. Some of my colleagues in Scotland said I should put the subtitles up and run through it but, unfortunately, that is not going to happen. I feel very privileged to have been asked to deliver this omnibus vote of thanks.

President, Congress, delegates, we had a very colourful start to our annual Congress with the parade of banners from all the regions and various branches. A big thank you to them all.

Also, we must not forget the colleagues of Birmingham & West Midlands Region who carried in our national banner. We thank you for this and for reminding us that we are as one. We are a family. We work together and this week we have played together, some I bet more than others and some suffering perhaps a bit more than others.

I would like first to pay tribute to my dear friend, Mary Turner, our wonderful President. She is an inspiration to all our members – sorry, guys – especially our women members. When I first became active at a national level I was in awe of such a wonderful and influential woman. She has taught me a lot. She takes time to talk to all new delegates and encourages them to come to the rostrum. Many of our new and not necessarily young members are nervous about speaking to such a gathering but she always puts them at ease. She is renowned for not suffering fools and the wider union movement and politicians are more than aware of this, and she has their respect.

It was only fitting that you, Mary, should have been awarded the Eleanor Marx Award, along with Cath Murphy, from my own region. You are both most deserving of this as you dedicate so much of your time to this union, even when perhaps not firing on all cylinders as you have both been through a trying time recently.

Last year Liz Blackman spoke eloquently about Mary and her husband, Denny. Unfortunately, Mary lost her dear Denny but was strong and continued to put the members and the interests of this union before her own sadness, and I know from personal experience how difficult that must have been.

Now, Malcolm, you are the sidekick or wingman that any president would be happy to have. You have stepped in when required and have done a wonderful job, for a man! What can I say? I am very feminist. You have been filling in for Mary in those comfort breaks. You take no prisoners when operating the traffic lights and everyone knows when that red light comes, get off! For all your hard work we thank you. Last year Liz Blackman said, “Long may you live.” Liz, I’ve got to correct you, sorry, it is, “Long may you long reap.” Malcolm, I hope it does.

I feel I need to give thanks to Paul Kenny, our now retired General Secretary, and I use the term “retired” very loosely. He steered us through some very difficult times

and we are stronger now than when I first came on to the CEC all those years ago. No doubt Pat, his wife, will find plenty to occupy him when he eventually slows down. I bet she already has a list of things to be done!

To our new General Secretary, what can I say? This was your maiden speech. Well, perhaps, in your case “maiden” is not quite the word I should be using. Your inaugural speech, it was eloquent, and laid out the plans for the next year and what your vision for this family is. We are growing year on year and under your stewardship we will continue to do so but, colleagues, let’s remember it is not just Tim’s remit to grow the union, it is every lay member and official. So, when we go back home and into our workplaces, recruit, recruit, recruit. (*Applause*)

Our many speakers included Glenis Willmott, Gill Furniss, who launched the Harry Harpham Parliamentary Programme in memory of her late husband, Luciana Berger, Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Paula Sherriff, MP, Ruth Smeeth and Jo Stevens MPs. Thank you for taking part in our panel discussion on Monday.

I would also like to thank Ian Smith, Chairman of Four Seasons, for his contribution and to Steve Gillan, Prison Officers Association, and who in this hall could not have been moved by Margaret Aspinall and Sue Roberts? (*Applause*) I know I was in tears. What can I say that has not already been said? I will just say a great big thank you for coming along and addressing this Congress.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the aforementioned and anybody that I may have missed for taking the time to come along and address us. I could not possibly thank our external speakers without mentioning Jeremy Corbyn, who addressed Congress. He reminded us the Labour Party is alive and well, despite some results in recent elections and with my accent you will know what I am talking about. A big thank you to him for taking time out of his busy schedule to be with us. (*Applause*)

Congress, now I turn to the Standing Orders Committee, ably chaired by Helen Johnson and advised by Barry Smith. They do a wonderful job and it is not an easy one. Thank you for all your hard work and allowing yourselves to be stuck in that room all week. Been there, done that, and I know how much coffee I drank.

Congress, organising such an event as this is a massive task and a tremendous amount of work goes on so when we leave here today the team will already be planning next year’s Congress in Plymouth. For them it is like painting the Forth Road Bridge, just get it finished and it is time to start all over again.

Thanks to T5 who erected the most impressive staging and backdrop and for all the work they do with the sound system and everything.

A big thanks has to go the stewards here. Regardless how hung over or how rough they are feeling, they are always cheery, or give the impression of being cheery, welcoming smile, and greeting us as we enter and leave this venue.

Moving on to the RMA, Jan addressed conference giving us, the future members of the RMA, an update on the work that you carry out for our retired members. For that we thank you for some day we will all be joining you, some sooner than others.

Thanks to those who encourage, or should I say bully and shame, us to buy raffle tickets for the RMA, and thanks to all who donated prizes, albeit as usual I did not win anything.

A big thanks must go to Kathleen Walker Shaw and her team from Brussels. Keep up the excellent work and I do hope like the Scottish referendum we get the result in the EU referendum we want.

There are a number of people I need to thank who without them Congress could not proceed. Firstly, our grateful thanks to the shorthand writers, Phyllis and Michael. Each word is recorded - (*Applause*) - and I know as a former shorthand typist how difficult it must be with all the different dialects in the room. Sometimes I struggle to understand some of the other areas, like you struggle to understand me.

We next need to thank the GMB auditors who have to be here but do nothing and to all the regional tellers who have been in the hall throughout Congress. Such discipline! I know for a fact Pat Breslin from GMB Scotland has been cross-legged on more than a few occasions.

Thanks to the Exhibitors for making the journey to join us and thanks to them for all their freebies, no doubt our bags are all heavier now than when we arrived.

There are not enough words to describe the work that Steve Short and the Head Office team do. They are the ones behind the scenes making sure that everything goes smoothly or at least giving that impression. Thank you for a job well done.

May I also thank Regional Secretaries and their PAs and Regional Office staff who support the delegations, not only here at Congress but those staff who work hard in their regions with all the preparations.

The coverage of this Congress in the press is second to none so a big thank you to the press team who ensure we are always to the forefront.

Ida, thank you and your policy team for ensuring that all business in the programme is carried out and on time. You make it seem so easy but then we do not see you running around frantic behind the scenes. Well, I have.

I would like to thank all the staff in the conference centre for all the hard work they do and for the fantastic welcome they have given us. A special thanks to the staff in the tea bar and without them I do not know how I would have survived. I do not know about the rest of you. My name is June and I am a coffee addict.

Last but not least you, the delegates, deserve a great big thank you, with lots of first time speakers who have all done brilliantly and, hopefully, now that they have been to the rostrum we will see them again giving speeches on subjects close to their hearts. Always remember that we have all been first timers, even Mary and Tim.

Congress, in the name of Tim Roache, General Secretary, Mary Turner, President, and Malcolm Sage, Vice President, and all of the CEC, let's raise the roof for all our delegates, young and old, first timers and old timers, let's get out there and keep

fighting the good fight and my saying is, always remember the management and politicians like us for not doing our job.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to deliver this vote of thanks but I am not quite finished yet. I would like, on behalf of GMB Scotland, to present Mary a wee minding of this Congress. (*Presentation amid applause*) Just in case anyone is wondering, it is not a football shirt!

All I have to say now is have a safe journey home, look forward to seeing you at Plymouth, and all the first timers back at the rostrum. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: June, can I say thank you so, so much. Your words mean an awful lot and I know you really, really did mean them. Thanks for respecting all those young delegates, new speakers, in the way you did.

Could I just add a couple of things and this is usually where I get weepy, weepy. I would like to thank my team up here and those who are working in the back stage, and the secretaries from all the regions and the offices, who do a great deal of work during this week.

I want to thank my region. I know Paul Kenny is here in another capacity. Paul, you know I love you, Pat, and your family. We have been close friends a long, long time, and so have I with the region. I do miss my friend Brenda, who kept me in toe, or she encouraged me. Most of all I miss Barbara, my greatest friend.

I want to thank you for this week, even though I did keep you late. I will not next time, please God. I want to thank everyone for what they have done. I congratulated Tim this week. I think you can say we had a good Congress and well done to everyone.

Most of all, I want to thank my family. They have been a great support to me, especially in the last few months. Without our families, and partners, we could not do what we do. We should always remember they are as important and they are supporting you because they know what you believe in, and what you believe in we keep on. Sometimes when you come home from where you have been, and you are tired, you do not want to go to sleep, and I bet you have been awake all week up there! Without them I could not have survived at times. Remember, they, too, are important to all of us. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

Oh dear, you can give me back those glasses! I now call Tim Roache for the General Secretary's closing speech.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S CLOSING SPEECH

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much, President. Thank you, Mary, and June, fantastic, what a vote of thanks. Talk about follow that! It was absolutely amazing.

I really did not know what I was going to encounter, what I was going to face when I came here at all. As I said to you the other day, I have sat there for more years than I

care to remember but I have never sat up there and I just did not know to expect. What I did know was how hard so many people worked to put this Congress together and put this Congress on in the first place. People like, and you have seen them buzzing around doing all sorts of work, Paula, and Kevin, and Cathleen, and people doing the names on the screen, and of course Ida and Steve, who I have seen in National Office in my few short months in the role working from 7 or 8 in the morning, till 9 o'clock at night, night after night after night to make sure this goes on.

The other point that June made, rightly, is that not only does planning for next year's Congress start almost immediately but when we all leave this hall today they will all start clearing up after us. Their work will carry on today, and tomorrow, just to see us all on our way. I pay an absolute tribute to you all; all of the other National Office staff, and the NAU staff, Bob Robinson, and Nick and your team, for making sure that the technology works.

On the technology side, I want to say a brilliant thanks to the people who put this together, look at the backdrop, and look at that, Union behind every single speaker, I think that looks amazing, and talk about proud. Thanks to Charlotte Gregory, particularly, for all your tireless work on that, and for the people in T5 to make sure that any pesky little hitches do not trip us up.

The Standing Orders Committee, sitting along the front here, led by Helen and Barry, what a job you do. We have to have some discipline and we have to have some rules and regs, and sometimes they are not very popular but they do the work that has to be done.

The photographer, Andrew Wiard, he is just about to take a picture of me so I better thank you. Andrew you are always around when we need you, mate. Thank you very much.

I also want to thank my new PA, Wendy Bartlam. Wendy started working for the GMB less than three weeks ago. She came along here the day before I did. She did not know what to expect either. Wendy, you have worked tirelessly. You have worked your socks off, not least in pursuit of my mobile phone that I left in the back of a taxi. But you fitted in fantastically well and I think the world of you and look forward to working with you for many, many years to come. Thank you, Wendy.

Let's look at what we have covered in this week. We endorsed the report that will mean the GMB's training has one module, delivers locally in regions on behalf of our reps on education, and training, and ensures that we continue to turn out the very best reps like all of you in the movement. We know it is reps that will build our union.

We have adopted a report on the care sector that we recognise is teetering on the brink through lack of funding.

We endorsed the report on the Trade Union Act, yes, rightly commending the work that we have done to change it from its original look but a call to arms that our change from check-off to direct debit continues for all Public Services members.

We came to a clear and unanimous view on our membership of the EU, recognising its far from perfect but when you look at jobs and trading, and energy and peace, and security, and angry remain is the only game in town.

We set up a group that will come back to next year's Congress on how a 21st century union includes all of our brilliant strands in our decision and policy making bodies.

We agreed to establish a body that will conduct a structural review, not a charter to close regions but we will look at our boundaries, our admin centres, our offices, our finances, and ensure that we are ready to face the challenges of Tory Britain in 2016.

We agreed to establish a body to look at and report, and recommend, on our internal democracy and voting. That holds no fears for any of us but one thing that Paul McCarthy and I said throughout the whole of the General Secretary election campaign is that we need to involve more people next time up, and that is exactly what we will do.

We celebrated our successes, some fantastic sessions from our blacklisted workers, and the work that we have done there, to the smart metering, from Liverpool City Council and the fantastic work you have done to get it back in-house. (*Applause*) We need to do that much more because the work that all of you do on behalf of our people day in, day out, needs bloody recognition and needs celebrating.

The sectional conferences led fantastically by the section presidents and assisted by the three brand new National Secretaries; they had been in role one day when they came here. So, Rehana, June, Justin, great work, well done, and thank you so much. I went to all of those conferences and they were conferences that were challenging. They were lively. They were discussing today's issues that affect our members and we will tackle them together.

The fringe meetings, on Grunwick, empowerment of women, our accounts, education, and training, young workers, pensions, energy, Venezuela and Cuba, dying to work campaign, mental health, show racism the red card, fantastic fringe meetings. One mistake I made is that I agreed to speak at them all. You know when you are keen in the new job, "Yea, yea, I'll come along and speak," so next time I will bring my trainers with my suits. Brendan, your point made yesterday about we should try and get the messages from those fringes out, we will work on that, brother, I promise you.

The exhibitors, a vital part of our Congress, and Hilary Perry, the work that you have done to get almost £100,000 worth of contribution to our GMB from those exhibitors, thank you, Hils, brilliant work, really appreciated. (*Applause*)

And of course, last but not most, hearing from Margaret and Sue, the Hillsborough campaign. Talk about moving. Talk about brave. You talk about brave people. You would stand and look and admire those two women, and all the other people that they stand shoulder to shoulder with and represent, they will do for me; incredible stuff.

Wow, what a week. Enormous amount of business done, enormous amount of work, enormous amount of decisions that impact tens of thousands of working people, the stuff that you have done this week will benefit them. But we could not have got

through any of it, you know, without the brilliant leadership, stewardship, and direction, that is, Mary and Malcolm. (*Applause*) You are the very best in the movement and we treasure you, we are lucky to have you both and we would not swap you for the world. When I said to you, I was dead nervous, and I was, I sat up there for the first time and I did not even know what to expect, and Mary gave me *that* straight away, it is a good luck card. It says, “Dear Tim, have a great week. Look forward to working with you. Mary and Malcolm,” and kisses. That is the mark of those two people and that card has sat on that front desk the whole of the time. Thank you both so much. (*Applause*)

And to Paul and Pat, who have been absolutely brilliant this week, again your generosity, your warmth, your advice, and your friendship. Paul, I will come and give you another kiss I love you that much, mate; superb.

There is someone else who has supported me this week untiringly and unstintingly, and that is my wife, Mandy, at the back. (*Applause*) Many of you will know we have a 14-year old lad, Nick, and since I have been doing this job I have spent a lot of time in London. I have been away most weeks. It has been tough. It has been tough on Mandy, it has been tough on Nick, and it has been tough on me. Mandy has not been away from Nick for a single night of his life, but she has been here all week with me. We phone him, morning, noon, and night but she has been here with me the whole week and she has been with me the last 16 years. Babe, I love you so much. Thank you.

Most of all I want to thank you, all of you, every single one of you, exactly as June has said, for your warmth, for your help, for your support this week, the way you rallied behind me. I made one foolish mistake, one error, not the word I used that I did not say and I should have, and your politics are, that is all I am going to say about that. You rallied behind me and I said, and I will say it again from this rostrum, to *The Daily Mail*, and to *The Sun*, and to Cameron, and to Farrage, and to Osborne, and anyone else, judge me on my record, not on one word, not what you want to print, judge me on my record, on equalities, on fairness, on gender issues, on fairness and justice for our members, for our people, judge me on what I do and we will then hold our light up together. Thank you. (*Applause*)

From sitting up there you get a bird’s eye view of you people as you come down to speak, and it has been incredible. I watched some of you sit there quaking like Sponge Bob at the bottom of the ocean. You have come up here and you have moved motions with professionalism and skill, and dedication, and pride, and as you walked off you have gone, “I done it,” and then best of all you not only have gone and done it, I have seen you back the next day. It is incredible. It is absolutely amazing. It is me who is proud, proud that you are representing our members here, our loyal brilliant members, proud of what you do for our members day in, day out, proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with sisters and brothers in this hall and across our union. As we prepare for Congress 2017 in Plymouth, which will be our 100th Congress, walk tall, walk ten feet tall, every single one of you, for the fantastic work you do in making people’s lives different and better, day in, day out. I am incredibly proud. You are a force for good and a force for incredible good. I will see many of you before we get to Plymouth next year because, as I have said to you, as the activist General Secretary I am going to come out and talk to you, and listen to you, and learn

from you. That is our strength, our brilliant strength is that this week we worked together, this week we debated together, this week we stood together, and that is how we will go forward, forward with the utter recognition and respect of our traditions, utter recognition of the giants on whose shoulders we stand, and using that bedrock to meet head-on the threats and challenges our members face by together building a 21st century union. Thank you for a fantastic week. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Tim. I agree with you, with Mandy up there, we had a good chat the other night. Can I now move and thank you the delegates because we could not have a Congress without you.

We now come to the closing ceremony which is in two parts. We will now have a short slide show with some highlights of Congress. If you have been sleeping out *there*, you can bet your life it will be up *there*!

Video shown to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we will now stand to sing *The Red Flag*.

Congress sang The Red Flag.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I wish you all a safe journey home and will be pleased to see you next year. Good luck.

Congress concluded.