

GMB CONGRESS 2017, PLYMOUTH

PRESIDENTS ADDRESS MARY TURNER

Congress,

I can't tell you how delighted I am to be here. As many of you might know, it's not been an easy year. First can I thank my Region for the support they have given me throughout my illness and all those who have taken the time to ring me to ask me how I am. Tim thank you for all you gave me and for visiting me in hospital at in my home and a special thank you to Malcolm for holding the fort. He is a great guy! But while I might not be as steady on my feet today – you can bet I'll be steady in keeping congress moving, so you better all behave yourselves!

You all know that if you cut me, I bleed GMB. Our union runs through me like a stick of rock.

I'm so proud to be welcoming you all to our 100th Congress – and before anyone says it - No I wasn't there at the first one!

We've come a hell of a long way as a union.

There have been good times and tough times, but our GMB family will always stick together. We're meeting this week – at a shortened Congress – because there is a General Election. It's sad for the new delegates who have been looking forward to coming.

Now is the time more than ever to stick together, because we need a Labour government on Thursday – no one but **us** will deliver that, our movement, out on the doorstep and speaking to people in our branches.

We owe it to our members. The Tories who told you to buy your house on right to buy now want to take it away if you get Dementia. They want to sell our NHS and saddle our young people with debt. They want to take food from our kids bellies and lay off thousands of hard working school catering staff. I was a dinner lady and we fought to get healthy free school meals we'll fight again now Mrs May! I can't believe how you treat those who can't live on the minimum wage and zero hours. Landlords raising rents that we can't afford, It's the landlord you should be stopping. How dare you insult those who use food banks who have to decide to feed your child or go without.

Congress, I used to say they would rob the eyes out of your head and then come back for the lashes. Well the time has come - Setting young against the senior citizens. This union has a view if you do the same work as anyone else you should get the same rate for the job and you should be given a living wage. Why should you be penalised because of your age. I give you a promise this Union will fight until we achieve this.

Now I come to my insults.

The public service workers who pay increases have been blocked at one per cent We don't want your praise. We work delivering services to the most vulnerable because we care. So stick your fine words where the sun doesn't shine. Give us what we deserve: Respect and a decent pay rise. Now the attack on carers who look after their loved ones saving millions. Caring for dementia is 24 hours not 8 hours a day. You intend to rob them of their homes and leave them without - **How generous of you!**

Congress, we celebrate 100 congresses today and I'm proud to be in Plymouth again. We have achieved a lot over the years, an 8 hour day, minimum wage, fighting to save our NHS. We were the first to raise issues on the mis-selling of pensions, the crisis in care homes, first to highlight those who raid company pension schemes, First to raise issues on thieving landlords. We have now finally got a commitment to have an enquiry on the injustice of Cammell Laird.

I want to thank each and every one of you for everything you do, it's people like you who built our union, it's you who keeps it growing today. We truly have a past to hold dear and be proud of and I know we have a great future ahead too.

Last but not least I want to thank my family for the time and effort they have given up over the last year to help me and especially one here today, my grand-daughter Lisa who has given her unstinting support to look after me. Lisa, thank you. I couldn't do without all their support just as you can't do without the support of your families.

Welcome to Congress.

Have a great few days. Let's get out there and fight for a Labour government! Thatcher never broke us, we won't let May do the same. Congress, don't be fooled listen to her words.

A message to you and your party - don't insult our intelligence

You could teach the great bank robbers a thing or two on how to rob us, this is dementia tax and we will fight you all the way!