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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUB-POSTMASTERS

**REPORT OF A MEETING
OF THE
NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

held on

22nd & 23rd SEPTEMBER 1997

at

THE QUEENS PARK HOTEL, LONDON



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<i>Present</i>	Mr A M Burrows Mr J E M Burford Mr A R Butlin Mrs J Kendall Mr J Peberdy	Chairman
<i>In Attendance</i>	Mr C Baker Mr K Davis	General Secretary Asst General Secretary

THE CHAIRMAN welcomed members of the Negotiating Committee to the meeting.

A) REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held with Post Office Counters on 10th July 1997 were amended as follows: Page 3, paragraph 1, line 3, delete "*Sub-Postmasters*" and insert "*the Post Office*".

The minutes of the meetings held on 2/3rd June, 3rd June, 10th July, 28th July and 12th August 1997 were approved and signed as a true record.

DECISION

B) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS

1 POST OFFICE BOARD - PO BD

Nothing to report.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

- THE POST OFFICE INQUIRY

It was understood the Select Committee would be interviewing the Post Office during November 1997. No further information was available.

3(a) POST OFFICE COUNTERS BOARD - PO PC 02

The meeting between the Negotiating Committee and members of the Post Office Counters Executive Council (POCC) on 10 October 1997 was confirmed. [Note: Subsequently held on 11 October 1997]

THE GENERAL SECRETARY pointed out that the meeting had been convened as a result of the work lost for Scottish Power and the opportunity would be taken to question the CEC regarding Scottish Power and:

- PayPoint and the loss of the public relations battle;
- APTs - the delay in Horizon was giving PayPoint a greater opportunity to gain a foothold in the market;
- Seek a debit card trial from Girobank on the private side for terminals which would double as APT machines with the Post Office paying half the rent or a fixed amount per swipe;
- Endeavour to persuade the CEC to approach the Corporate Board for financial assistance to buy or lease more APT machines;
- Royal Mail who had instigated three initiatives - direct approaches to small businesses to buy stamps direct; following day delivery credit and debit card payment; franking machines replaced with modern equipment which did not require to be set at the post office;
- Format pricing which would remove the necessity for scales, bulk size would determine the cost of postage.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY commented that for the good of the Corporation Post Office Counters had been bailing out Royal Mail for years. Now the Counters Business, because of Scottish Power, PayPoint and Royal Mail, needed bailing out. He suggested the Federation approached the Corporate Board direct.

MR. BURFORD wished to know what, if anything, had gone wrong regarding Scottish Power. He had received complaints about lack of consultation, particularly from Post Office personnel who were equally concerned at the loss of business.

MRS. KENDALL forecast problems arising from the direct approach by Scottish Power to Sub-Postmasters to undertake the work on their private side.

MR. BURROWS expressed concern as to how Sub-Postmasters could be expected to hold the line if the multiples undertook the work. It was important to hold a strong line regarding the multiples. In the future the Federation would have to be more pro-active and was intrigued that information had not been received from members.

Irrelevant

6 TRAINING FOR SUBPOSTMASTERS - PC HR 04

MR. BUTLIN reported on an initiative in the South West and South Wales Region of Sub-Postmasters being offered £6.19 per hour to assist in training other Sub-Postmasters. It was noted the national agreement was for £6.65 per hour to which Mr. Butlin had referred the Region and was awaiting a response.

Irrelevant

8(b) PO STORES - PC NW 04

Nothing to report.

8(c) COUNTER AUTOMATION - BA/POCL - PC NW 06 01

THE GENERAL SECRETARY reported arrangements were being made for him to visit the South Wales and South West Region to view the Horizon platform.

A number of reviews were taking place.

ICL had considered whether to continue the Pathway business as it would be 5 years before they would make any money and the contract was for 8 years. Horizon was 12 months behind the original date. In addition there was the possibility of clients being lost to PayPoint. A meeting had taken place between John Roberts, John Bennett, David Brooke, Chairman of ICL and the financial representative from Japan, who had agreed to proceed with the Horizon programme.

Girobank was being kept informed by the Federation and was continually reviewing its position with the Post Office.

The platform for CAPS was a long way behind schedule.

A review was being conducted by the Counters Business of the PDA. The intention was to shrink the PDA which had grown to 130 personnel.

It was suggested an upbeat message be circulated to members. As a result of a meeting held on 15th August 1997, it had been agreed to publish a monthly article in the journal to be organised by Alison Orsmond. Unfortunately no articles had been received but arrangements had been made for the Editor to interview Paul Rich.

The difficulties regarding the implementation of the Horizon programme would be raised at the meeting with the CEC on 6th October 1997.

ACTION

It was pointed out the Horizon platform was not capable of processing APT transactions.

8(d) COUNTER AUTOMATION - APT/BAR-CODING - PC NW 06 02

Concern was expressed that not all Sub-Postmasters had APT machines and could not, therefore, consider the PayPoint threat. The CEC meeting would place great emphasis on this aspect.

8(e) COUNTER AUTOMATION - ALPS - PC NW 06 07

Nothing to report.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

31 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1997

97/RB1(E) *Introductory Payment spread over 5 years*

Correspondence sent to Post Office Counters and circulated.

97/RB1(H) *Adjust shortfall caused by 53 week year*

The subject had been raised in the pay discussions with Post Office Counters. It was suggested the subject was pursued in meetings with Post Office Counters rather than in correspondence (Box 13).

97/3 *Align payments upwards for similar transactions*

The Post Office had agreed to meet and discuss intermittent allowances.

97/4 *Seek incentives for efficient management record*

Letter sent to Post Office Counters and circulated.

97/5 *Leave negotiating door open for impact of minimum wage legislation*

Action already taken.

97/6 *POCL to pay same hourly rate when training assistants*

Attention was drawn to the lack of financial headroom and it was suggested the subject be pursued with caution in correspondence.

97/7 53rd week

To be dealt with in Box 13 of the Pay Review.

97/10 Payment for DNS products

Letter written to Post Office Counters and circulated.

97/12 Investigate payment for POPOS display

97/15 Information/negotiate payment for POPOS

Both items were being pursued in correspondence as well as Box 13 of the Pay Review. Concern was expressed that POPOS could become mandatory as opposed to the current situation of voluntary participation by Sub-Postmasters.

97/18 Offset improvements/equipment against Intro Fee

To be pursued through the Network Forum meetings.

97/19 Joint Sub-Postmaster appointments

97/21 POCL booklet for shortages

Action already taken by the General Secretary.

97/23 Unclaimed holiday substitution carried forward in exceptional circumstances

To be pursued in correspondence.

97/24 Immediate settlement on telephone call allowance, Bristol

To be the subject of a meeting with Post Office Counters. It was noted the Post Office new telephone call system of free calls to the clients for whom work was undertaken, had not come to fruition. It may be necessary to challenge the Inland Revenue on the benefit in kind and obtain a dispensation.

97/28 Seek relief for counter losses during automation for those with good accounting record

Action had already been taken and the subject would continue within the Horizon discussions.

97/29 Provision of Horizon program to check calculation of salary

Action already in hand.

97/RB4(P) Update on provision of interest-free loans for security

It was suggested the matter be pursued with the Retail Development Centre and in the Network Forum meetings.

97/RB4(R) Update on provision of relief/s following attack trauma

Write to the Retail Development Centre, followed by a meeting.

**97/35 *Free relocation of security equipment when
Sub-Postmasters improve office***

It was pointed out that if the Post Office did not provide free relocation of security equipment, they were, in fact, in breach of the contract.

Bearing in mind the security budget was reduced by 10% in the current year, it was suggested the subject be referred to both the Security Division and the Network Forum meetings.

Attention was drawn to the fixed price contract with Romec who sub-contracted the work. Cases were known of Sub-Postmasters who had obtained much lower quotations from other contractors whom, it transpired, were then the sub-contractors used by Romec. Concern was expressed that both Sub-Postmasters and Post Office Counters were being over-charged by Romec.

**97/36 *Installation temporary TV surveillance following serious
raid plus full security survey***

To be raised in the Security meeting.

**97/37 *Negotiate competitive closed circuit TV package for
Sub-Postmasters***

A closed circuit television package had been arranged by the Federation on behalf of Sub-Postmasters. The package had been featured in the August 1997 edition of *The SubPostmaster* journal.

**97/38 *Consider needs when arranging patterns for cash and
stock***

Correspondence had been sent to Post Office Counters.

**97/40 *Disclosure of information by POCL and Police following
criminal attacks***

To be raised in the Security meeting. The General Secretary would also raise the matter during the Crimestoppers Trust Annual dinner on 11th November to which he had been invited.

GRO
GRO THE CHAIRMAN thanked those present for their attendance.

GRO

ELAINE AUSTIN