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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUB-POSTMASTERS

**REPORT OF A MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

held on

22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th MARCH 1998

at

THE ABBEY HOTEL, MALVERN

A G E N D A

MARCH 1998

- A/1 REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS of the:**
Executive Council Meeting held on 4th, 5th, 6th January 1998

- A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS**

- A/3 REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

The following report refer:- NC 26/27.2.1998

POST OFFICE GROUP

1. **Post Office Board** PO BD
2. **Government Affairs** PO PZ
 Individual Savings Accounts
 The Minimum Wage - Low Pay Commission
 The Post Office Inquiry - Trade and Industry Committee
3. **Post Office Counters**
 (b) Organisation Development PO PC 03
4. **Off-Shore Islands**
 (b) Isle of Man OI IM *

POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED

5. **Commercial** PC CM

6. **Human Resources**PC HR
7. **Mailwork**PC MP
8. **Network**
 - (a) Network ForumsPC NW 01
 - Counters Club
 - (b) Counter Automation - BA/POCLPC NW 06 01
 - (c) Automated Payment TerminalsPC NW 06 02
9. **Security**
 - (b) Devolution of Budget to RegionsPC NW 11 01 *
 - Regional Security Forums
10. **Product Range**
 - (a) Commemorative CoinsPC PR 07
11. **Quality**PC QY
12. **Subpostmasters Contract**
 - (d) PaypointPC SC 21 01
 - (e) NIPOCPC SC 28 *
13. **Subpostmasters Pay**
 - (b) Pay Claim 1998PC SP/1998
 - (c) Payment RatesPC SP 01
 - Bill Payment
 - Interim Payment Rate for Transactions
 - (e) Telephone AllowancesPC SP 02 06

POCL CLIENTS

14. Benefits Agency CL BA
15. British Gas CL BG
16. British Telecom
 - (a) BT Payment Cards CL BT 04
17. Electricity Boards
 - (a) Scottish Power CL EB 09
18. Foreign Exchange CL FX
19. Girobank
 - (a) Girobank/NFSP Quality Forum CL GB 01 *
 - (b) Winter Fuel Payments CL GB 08 12 *
20. Insurance CL IN
21. Local Authorities CL LA
22. Lotteries
 - (a) National Lottery CL LO 01
 - LSN's
 - Prize Payments
23. Mercury Communications CL MC
24. National Savings
 - (b) Marketing CL NS 03

25. **Personal Banking**
(a) Personal Financial Services CL PB *
26. **Payment Collection Services** CL PC
27. **Parcelforce** CL PF
28. **Royal Mail**
(b) Do Not Redirect CL RM 05 07 *
29. **Utilities**
(a) Energi Gas CL UT 07
30. **DVLA**
(a) Statutory Off Road Notification CL VL 04
31. **Water Authorities** CL WA
32. **Western Union/Moneygram**
(a) Moneygram CL WU
33. **Organisations** FM OO

A/3 items without correspondence:-

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|--|-------------|----|
| 3. | (a) | Post Office Counters Board | PO PC 02 | NC |
| 4. | (a) | Guernsey | OI GY | NC |
| | (c) | Jersey | OI JY | NC |
| 6. | (a) | Training for Subpostmasters | PC HR 04 | NC |
| 8. | (d) | Counter Automation - ALPS | PC NW 06 07 | NC |
| | | - Goodwill payment for Sub-Postmasters | | |
| | (e) | Cash and Stock Resourcing and Distribution | PC NW 09 | NC |
| | (f) | Funding of SPSOs | PC NW 09 03 | NC |

9.	(a)	POCL/NFSP Meetings	PC NW 11 01	NC
	(c)	Equipment	PC NW 11 02	NC
		- Trial of Smoke & Dye Packs		
		- New SPSO anti-bandit screen (SPSO 2000)		
		- Access Doors		
		- Anti-intruder Alarm Grants		
		- Proposed Trial of Remote Alarm Signalling		
	(d)	Trauma Care Programme	PC NW 11 03	NC
11.	(a)	Customer First	PC QY 01	NC
12.	(a)	Termination Procedures	PC SC	NC
	(b)	Introductory Payment	PC SC 04	NC
	(c)	Loss of Office (Compensation Agreement)	PC SC 12	NC
13.	(a)	Pay Review	PC SP	NC
		- Identifying costs of running an office		
	(d)	Intermittent Allowances	PC SP 02 03	NC
14.	(a)	BES - 'Casual' Agents	CL BA 03	NC
15.	(a)	Quantum	CL BG 03	NC
23.	(a)	Mercury One to One Pre-Pay Vouchers	CL MC	NC
24.	(a)	NFSP/DNS Trade Union meeting	CL NS 01	NC
26.	(a)	Vodafone / Orange	CL PC 04	NC
28.	(a)	Priority Services	CL RM 05 02	NC
33.	(a)	POUNC	FM OO	NC

A/4 CONFERENCE MATTERS

- (a) Nominations
- (b) Supplementary Report of the Executive Council
- (c) Motions
- (d) Motions and Nominations received late
- (e) Conference Agenda, Annual Accounts, Officers' Reports, etc.
- (f) Standing Orders Committee (Expenses)
- (g) Report on Conference Arrangements - Official Guests, etc.
- (h) Conference Reporting
- (i) Conference Grants to Delegates (Union Facilities)
- (j) Official Conference Observers
- (k) Tellers
- (l) Cartoonist
- (m) Vice President - Order of Seniority
- (n) President's Testimonial
- (o) Gift to President's Partner

A/5 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) PUBLICITY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. REPORT OF PUBLICITY & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

16 & 17 February 1998

2. FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Annual Conference - 1998

Annual Conference - 1999

Annual Conference - 2000

FM AC

FM AC 1998

FM AC 1999

FM AC 2000

3. FEDERATION INTERNAL

Membership Issues

Subscriptions

Federation Publications

"The Subpostmaster"

FI MR 03

FI MR 05

FM PB 01

4. FEDERATION PROMOTION & PUBLICITY

Review of Posters / Corporate Image

FM PP 02

Future Dates and Venues of EC Meetings

June 1998 Monday 15 - Wednesday 17 June 1998

October 1998 Monday 19 - Wednesday 21 October 1998

January 1999 Sunday 10 - Tuesday 12 January 1999

March 1999 Sunday 21 - Wednesday 24 March 1999

Malvern

Malvern

To be decided

Malvern

B) FEDERATION TRUSTEES REPORT

C) BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE REPORT

D) CENTENARY CHARITIES

A/6 SPECIAL MATTERS

A) MEMBERSHIP

(i) Proposal for the Deregulation Order 1998 PC HR 03

B) FINANCE

(i) Treasurer's Report FI AC 02

(ii) Annual Conference Costs 1993-97 FI AC

(ii) Outstanding Branch Accounts FI CO 03

A/6 C) JOURNAL

(i) Editor's Report FM PB 01

D) TRADING

(i) Eagle Star Scheme FI ES

A/7 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS PRIOR 1998

95/70 Credit Facilities - Small Businesses

97/12&15 POPOS *

97/53 Sub Post Office Audits

97/54 Accounting Procedures

A/8 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1998

Schedule of 1998 motions circulated for consideration
under the A/4 section of the agenda.

A/9 MOTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

A/10 DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

(A) FOR DISCUSSION

POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED

Sub-Postmasters Contract

1. (a) Christmas/New Year Arrangements 1997/98 PC SC 05 01

Subpostmasters Pay

2. (a) APT Schemes PC SP 02 08

POCL CLIENTS

Benefits Agency

3. (a) Benefit Payment Card CL BA 03
- Re-Design of Order Book Foils *
- (b) Recall Notices - ALP's Offices CL BA 06

Foreign Exchange

4. (a) Bureau de Change CL FX 01 *

Girobank

5. (a) Winter Fuel Payments CL GB 08 12

Insurance

6. (a) Merger of General Accident with Commercial Union .. CL IN 01

Local Authorities

7. (a) Home Help/Care Stamps CL LA 01

Lotteries

8. (a) National Lottery CL L0 01
- "Instants" Gaming Strategy

A/10 (B) FOR INFORMATION

Commercial

1. (a) Market Research PC CM 02

Network

2. (a) Cash Accounts for 1998/99 PC NW 08 01
(b) 50p Commemorative Coin PC NW 09 03

Product Range

3. (a) Gift Vouchers PC PR 06

POCL CLIENTS

Lotteries

4. (a) National Lottery CL LO 01
- "Aces High" Instant

- (b) Rose (Princess Diana) Littlewood Scratchcard CL LO 02

Mercury Communications

5. (a) One 2 One Up 2 You Cards CL MC 02

National Savings

6. (a) Fraud Awareness Campaign CL NS 04

Passport Agency

7. (a) Fee Increases to Passport Applications CL PA

Royal Mail

8. (a) Stamps CL RM 05 05
- Diana, Princess of Wales, Stamps

A/11 REPORT ON CENTRAL APPEALS

A/12 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Right to Refuse a Post Office customer

Web Site on the Internet

Discussion on the Future Structure/Strategy of the
National Federation of Sub-Postmasters.

A/13 NFSP TRADING LIMITED

A/14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

A/15 MATTERS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR INCLUSION ON AGENDA

A/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000



REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
held on 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th MARCH 1998
at the ABBEY HOTEL, MALVERN

Present: Mr J Peberdy, National President and Chairman

Mr. N Bradbrook	Mr. D A Evans
Mr J Brennan	Mr B G Ingham
Mr D T Broadwith	Mr J Jannetta
Mr J E M Burford	Mrs P Jenkins
Mr A M Burrows	Mr C Jones
Mr A R Butlin	Mrs J G Kendall
Mr M Challinor	Mr D F Marshall
Mr M Darvill	Mr B McMahon
Mr R Edmondson	Mr H Morgan Jones

In Attendance: Mr C Baker General Secretary
Mr K Davis Assistant General Secretary
Mr P Heasman Assistant General Secretary

Apologies: Mr I Abernethy

THE CHAIRMAN welcomed everyone to the meeting.

GRO

GRO

GRO

GRO

Irrelevant

DECISION

THE CHAIRMAN announced that in accordance with previous Executive Council wishes, Agenda item A/4 would be discussed prior to A/3.

A/1 REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS of the
Executive Council Meeting held on 4, 5, 6 January 1998

The Report had been circulated and was APPROVED.

DECISION

A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS

There were no matters arising.

A/3 REPORTS OF MEETINGS OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Negotiating Committee held on 26/27th February 1998 had been circulated. The Negotiating Committee had also met on numerous occasions with Post Office Counters and verbal reports would be given during the report.

1 POST OFFICE BOARD - PO BD

MR BURROWS, Chairman of the Negotiating Committee, reported that the appointment of Dr. Neville Bain as Chairman of The Post Office was announced in the press on 4th March 1998, at which date a letter of congratulations had been sent to him. An invitation had been sent to Dr. Bain to speak at the opening of the Federation's Annual Conference in Bournemouth. During the course of the meeting a letter was received in which Dr. Bain declined the invitation to address the 1998 Annual Conference.

A series of meetings with the Strategy Director for the Corporation, Vanessa Leeson, had been organised by the General Secretary so that the Federation would have a voice direct to the Corporate Board as well as the one put forward by the Counters Business.

2 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS - PO PZ
2(a) GOVERNMENT REVIEW
- INDIVIDUAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Post Offices had received a clear reference to handling ISAs in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement in the House of Commons on 17th March 1998. No doubt that was due in part to the pressure by the Federation on behalf of the Post Office and the fact that Stuart Sweetman met with Gerald Robinson the day before the Budget to pursue the Counters cause.

- THE MINIMUM WAGE - LOW PAY COMMISSION

The Government had not yet announced the minimum wage. The Low Pay Commission had enquired whether the Federation would be willing to be listed in the report as having given evidence to the Submission and whether the evidence could be published. An affirmative response had been sent and once again the Federation had made itself available to the Low Pay Commission should further information be required.

- THE POST OFFICE INQUIRY - TRADE & INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

It would appear from speculation in the press that the Government was soon to advise in which direction it intended to take the Post Office. It seemed that the "Heseltine solution of partial sell off for Royal Mail and Parcelforce" was being trailed in the press which could be inspired leaks. Pressure had been maintained on the Government and the Federation had written once again to Ian McCartney seeking a meeting. Ian McCartney had responded stating he would be pleased to meet the Federation again but shortly after the announcement of the next stage of the Review which was expected to be in the next few weeks. Some important signals could be taken from the correspondence dated 11th February received from Margaret Beckett which seemed to come out fairly strongly in support of post offices, particularly sub post offices and the part they played in the commercial infra-structure of the country. An item reported under the Horizon debate could also be taken as a positive signal that John Denham MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Social Security would be attending Conference. That correspondence stated the value of the strong links between the Government and the Department. Regrettably a reply was awaited to the Federation's letter to Tony Blair MP an acknowledgement of which was received on 12th February. Contact had been made again with Number 10 Downing Street seeking a considered response.

3 POST OFFICE COUNTERS

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

Nothing to report.

3(b) ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT - PO PC 03

Correspondence had been circulated, including a resourcing map of the Internal Communications Department and the proposals to reduce the number of publications. Links would be maintained with the Board of Post Office Counters as plans for the Counters Business, both with the Government and within the Corporation were developed.

Irrelevant

5 COMMERCIAL - PC CM

Nothing to report.

6 HUMAN RESOURCES

6(a) TRAINING FOR SUBPOSTMASTERS - PC HR 04

As indicated in the minutes, the Negotiating Committee had received information about a trial in the South East Region of a training programme for newly appointed Sub-Postmasters which was a mixture of classroom and on-site training. The Committee would be considering the trial and Sub-Postmasters' training in general at its next meeting. It would be helpful if Executive Officers could provide details of the training package currently offered to new Sub-Postmasters in each of their Regions. Mr N. Bradbrook and Mr D. Evans were thanked for providing information to Headquarters.

7 MAILWORK - PC MP

The matter of an increase for Mailwork Sub-Postmasters which was due on 1st November 1997 had not yet been resolved. A reminder letter had been sent and Post Office Counters had been advised in meetings that the Federation was keen to negotiate and resolve the matter.

Concern was expressed at the delay in receipt of replies from Mr. Granville. That concern was shared by the Negotiating Committee which listed at its last meeting a number of outstanding items. It was pointed out that Mr. Granville was vastly overloaded with work and did not have quality resources to assist him.

MR EDMONDSON advised of the action by Royal Mail to concentrate mailwork in the Doncaster and York areas which would affect approximately 15 sub offices. Post Office Counters had no idea of mailwork local unit specifications.

MR BURROWS drew attention to the Negotiating Committee minutes which reported the Mailwork Sub-Committee had met on 26th January 1998 whereat 26 action points had been identified, including the rationalisation programme in the Durham area and the events in the North East Region. Mr Granville had sent Carolyn Ratcliffe and Evan Elliott to visit and ascertain the mailwork situation in the North East Region where it appeared Post Office Counters was very lackadaisical protecting mailwork offices. That activity did not appear to be taking place in other Regions. In North Thames and East Anglia Region it was known that £80,000 was being spent on a Sub-Postmaster's mailwork office and that other investment was in the pipeline.

MR BURROWS explained Post Office Counters needed designated Mailwork members of staff properly trained in aspects of mailwork processes in sub offices. The Federation was endeavouring to ensure at least one Retail Network Manager was trained per cluster, but Retail Network Managers were moved around and the replacement was not trained.

8 NETWORK
8(a) NETWORK FORUMS - PC NW 01
- COUNTERS CLUB

The correspondence of 15th January indicated the current position of Counters Club. Other initiatives being acted by Post Office Counters included a trial of business post offices. One post office in the South West, namely Prince Street Branch Office, Bristol, was participating in the trial involving activity around 5 themes: training products and service portfolio, environment, marketing and research. It was intended that the post office would offer services to smaller and medium enterprises in the vicinity of this particular office. The Post Office had indicated it was prepared to discuss this matter with the Federation, which would be encouraged as part of the Network Reviews.

Other initiatives were being discussed with Post Office Counters, mainly:-

Equipment / open plan trials

Network transformation / Conformance

Combination stores and, of course, Horizon.

Clearly that illustrated the many separate initiatives and in the Network meetings Post Office Counters was being advised of the Federation's concerns at the number of initiatives.

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

The minutes of the Negotiating Committee reflected the situation which existed at the time. There had been a great deal of press speculation about the future of the Horizon Platform and that speculation was growing. Intelligence sources were still saying that the Benefit Agency would like to be disengaged from the project and concentrate on ACT and an updated ALPs style of fraud detection. Everyone in Post Office Counters, the Corporation and ICL Pathway were involved in keeping the Government interested in Horizon and the Federation was fully involved with all of those and the DTI. The news that John Denham MP would be at Conference was an excellent signal of commitment and his interest must be maintained.

The GENERAL SECRETARY commented the press reports were predominantly true, with *Government Computing* containing leaks from the Benefits Agency. If the Government pulled out of the Horizon Platform then ICL Pathway would go out of business. The following questions had been put in the House of Commons on 25th February 1998 to the Secretary of State for Social Security by Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody MP:-

- (i) what progress her Department was making with the introduction of the computerised social security benefits system in post offices?
- (ii) what was the target date for all post offices to be connected to the computerised social security system?
- (iii) how many post offices she planned to be connected to the computerised social security system in the next 12 months, and how many were currently connected?
- (iv) what assessment she had made of the service provided by ICL to introduce the computerised social security system into post offices?

The answer given by John Denham MP was that 205 post offices in the South West and North East of England were paying child benefit by payment card as part of the Horizon Platform. All post offices would be automated by the end of the year 2000. Current plans would extend the trial to 305 offices early in 1999. The Benefits Agency and Post Office Counters routinely monitored and assess performance of the new system before a national introduction. The GENERAL SECRETARY cautioned that use of the phrase "current plans" was Parliamentary speak for "could be changed".

MR. BRADBROOK pointed out that if the ALPS system was updated, that would release into the Provinces London APT machines which only needed software to enable them to be up and running.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY explained that when automation was functioning in 10% of the network Post Office Counters would have to sign up with Pathway. Pathway had put forward the same view as London Sub-Postmasters, that with an adjustment, the existing equipment could be used. Post Office Counters' staff were looking at the question outside of Pathway. ICL Pathway had asked the Treasury for £100,000 and requested the Benefits Agency to extend the length of contract from 5 years to 8 years which would mean extending the Horizon PFI from 5 to 10 years. ICL had also gone back to Fujitsu for more money.

MR BURROWS stated that since the January Executive Council meeting a lot of work had taken place below the surface. Various questions had been asked in Select Committees and the Government. The General Secretary and he operated in the War Cabinet with Post Office Counters.

The GENERAL SECRETARY stressed the difficulty experienced by Pathway with regard to modifications to the system. Pathway wanted Sub-Postmasters to contribute towards the cost. At the moment it was important to tell Post Office Counters and Pathway that Sub-Postmasters were not offering anything towards the cost; The Rt. Hon. Peter Lilley MP had stated the automation system would be provided free.

8(c) AUTOMATED PAYMENT TERMINALS - PC NW 06 02

Written confirmation of the decision to provide a further 2000 APTs into the network was received in the letter dated 26th February 1998. Although it would be easy to state that it was too little too late, it, nevertheless, represented an important step in fighting the competition providing 85% of automated bill payment being delivered electronically. The Negotiating Committee raised this with the CEC in October 1997 and had never given up arguing for them. Some credit must, therefore, go to the Federation, although its contribution would never be publicly acknowledged.

8(d) COUNTER AUTOMATION - ALPS - PC NW 06 07 - GOODWILL PAYMENT FOR SUB-POSTMASTERS

MR DARVILL commented that the ALPs equipment had saved the Benefits Agency £30,000,000. Sub-Postmasters received a contribution towards electricity costs for lottery terminals. London Sub-Postmasters no longer received £10.00 for each book impounded.

The GENERAL SECRETARY stated Post Office Counters did not pay electricity for Camelot lottery terminals. The Benefits Agency wanted the ALPs system as it was capable of providing the service required. It had been agreed to pursue a goodwill payment for London Sub-Postmasters, but the timing was wrong. The GENERAL SECRETARY repeated the comments contained in the debate under 8(b) apropos Pathway. It had been accepted that the likelihood of payment for electricity was negligible upon implementation of the new system.

MR DARVILL pointed out that if London Sub-Postmasters did not use the machines correctly, Post Office Counters sought repayment. Sub-Postmasters received notification to pay one and impound the book; irate customers demanded the return of the book which could then be used for fraudulent purposes.

MR BRADBROOK stated all books had to be bar-coded, every transaction had to be bar-coded and read on the monitor. Forgers changed the whole face of pension books. The monitors were hot as were the computers underneath the desk. All that was being asked was a payment.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY pointed out the decision as to the timing was the responsibility of the Executive Council and suggested it be deferred. He asked from whom the money was sought - it cost Post Office Counters £14 million - or the Benefits Agency who saved the money? He asked the Executive Council members if they advocated the Federation approaching the Benefits Agency for a goodwill payment to London Sub-Postmasters at the current time.

MR BRADBROOK stated Sub-Postmasters spend a lot of money to keep the machinery running and were only seeking a small payment.

MR JANNETTA commented Sub-Postmasters would have to pay their own electricity bills.

Irrelevant

ACTION

ACTION

Irrelevant

8(f) FUNDING OF SPSOs - PC NW 09 03

Nothing to report.

9. SECURITY

Irrelevant

9(a) POCL/NFSP MEETINGS - PC NW 11 01

9(b) DEVOLUTION OF BUDGET TO REGIONS - PC NW 11 01
- REGIONAL SECURITY FORUMS

Nothing to report.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

ACTION

ACTION

9(d) TRAUMA CARE PROGRAMME - PC NW 11 02

Nothing to report.

10 PRODUCT RANGE

10(a) COMMEMORATIVE COINS - PC PR 07

Following discussion at the January 1998 Executive Council Meeting, a further letter was sent to Post Office Counters which had been circulated.

- **The Executive Council AGREED to discharge this item from the A/3 Agenda.**

DECISION

11 QUALITY

11(a) CUSTOMER FIRST - PC QY 01

Nothing to report.

12 SUBPOSTMASTERS CONTRACT

12(a) TERMINATION PROCEDURES - PC SC

Although there was no correspondence on this subject, it was felt that the time may well have come to agree the proposals put to the Federation last year and argue about the remaining paragraph when the difficulties affecting it were over. The delay was due to a possible Court case. It was hoped to receive a letter from Post Office Counters regarding Paragraph 11 which would enable Conference at Bournemouth to be advised of the new termination procedures.

MR DARVILL advised the case in question was that of Mr. Coney who had deposited £100,000 in order to take Post Office Counters to Court. Post Office Counters had deposited £27,000 with the Court. There were several other outstanding cases, one being Mr. Sedani of Princesfield PO. He was not happy with the termination procedure as very often an appeal had been decided beforehand and suggested an independent outside appeal.

The GENERAL SECRETARY pointed out the new procedures, particularly Paragraph 11 referred to repayment of money to Sub-Postmasters upon reinstatement. Mr. Coney was seeking the return of money not paid during his suspension. The difficulties explained by Mr. Darvill would be addressed.

- **THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AGREED to accept the draft Termination Procedures, excluding Paragraph 11.**

DECISION

12(b) INTRODUCTORY PAYMENT - PC SC 04

Nothing to report.

12(c) LOSS OF OFFICE (Compensation Agreement) - PC SC 12

Nothing to report.

12(d) PAYPOINT - PC SC 21 01

PayPoint was still increasing its outlets in spite of reports about the dissatisfaction of their agents. PayPoint seemed to be "gilding the lily" considerably by promising clients a full network of around 8,000 outlets by 1998. There was no doubt that they were having an effect on Post Office volumes in the areas where they had a presence. Sub-Postmasters generally would wish to see Post Office Counters fight back a little more aggressively. However, some regions seemed better prepared than others. On a related issue the Office of Fair Trading was examining into Post Office Counters following a complaint made by PayPoint.

The GENERAL SECRETARY indicated the situation was potentially very serious. It was believed that PayPoint and Scottish Power were arguing that the Post Office was in restraint of trade by not allowing Sub-Postmasters to handle the Scottish Power work. The Office of Fair Trading had put 33 questions to the Post Office which had been passed to which Mr. Granville for reply. It was expected the Federation might be called. If the Office of Fair Trading determined the Post Office was in restraint of contract it would mean Sub-Postmasters could work for PayPoint as well as Post Office Counters, likewise the Gas Board as well as Post Office Counters, etc. Therefore the clients would cut out Post Office Counters and approach Sub-Postmasters direct and if that movement continued Post Office Counters would cease. That would effectively affect the strength of what singled Sub-Postmasters out from other High Street outlets, that of being tied together under a strong brand image. He urged the Council to retain the line always held, that the restrictions in the contract held the sub post office network together. If the Office of Fair Trading lifted restrictions, then the Federation would maximise the opportunity and operate its own brand. Attention was drawn to the previous advice from Legal Counsel not to challenge the restrictions as Sub-Postmasters would lose their strength.

12(e) NIPOC - PC SC 28

The letter dated 19th March 1998 from Mr J. Legg of Post Office Counters had been circulated together with Mr P. Bloor's notes of 20th March 1998.

MR EDMONDSON asked whether an explanation had been received as to why it had taken so long to effect the re-payments for 1992/93.

MR MORGAN JONES confirmed the NIPOC payments were being made. He wondered who would compensate Sub-Postmasters for the interest lost on investments?

The GENERAL SECRETARY stated Mr Bloor had done excellent work with regard to NIPOC. With regard to compensation, he pointed out John Roberts had promised that Sub-Postmasters would not lose out and, if necessary, the matter would be referred to John Roberts.

13 SUBPOSTMASTERS PAY**13(a) PAY REVIEW - PC SP
- IDENTIFYING COSTS OF RUNNING AN OFFICE**

Contact had been made with Emma Watson of Hartley McMaster who accepted that a greater trawl of Sub-Postmasters was required. It was essential that the element of the pay review was completed and as seen by the draft pay letter to be discussed next on the agenda, the Federation was raising the matter again.

13(b) PAY CLAIM 1998 - PC SP/1998

- The draft pay claim was considered and APPROVED by the Executive Council.

DECISION

13(c) PAYMENT RATES- PC SP 01
- BILL PAYMENT

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

13(d) INTERMITTENT ALLOWANCES - PC SP 02 03

Nothing to report.

13(e) TELEPHONE ALLOWANCES - PC SP 02 06

The letter of 14 January 1998 from the General Secretary echoed the points raised and the assurances sought at the January 1998 Executive Council meeting. Post Office Counters had been reminded that a response was awaited.

14 BENEFITS AGENCY

14(a) BES 'CASUAL' AGENTS - CL BA 03

The position as outlined at the January 1998 Executive Council meeting still applied. Pressure was being maintained with the Managing Director and the CEC to pursue and resolve the potential serious position.

MR BROADWITH reported Sub-Postmasters in the South West who participated in the Horizon trials were being blackmailed by holiday relief's who charged £50.00 per day to run the office. There was a need to shop around and find relief's who would do the job at a reasonable price.

15 BRITISH GAS

15(a) QUANTUM - CL BG 03

It was understood discussions were taking place to include Quantum in automation as British Gas Smart cards would be available through PayPoint. It was a logical progression.

16 BRITISH TELECOM

16(a) BT PAYMENT CARDS - CL BT 04

The Negotiating Committee was still pursuing with Post Office Counters the scope for processing a non-embossed BT payment card as a manual transaction on a trial basis. The latest correspondence circulated was a letter to Post Office Counters requesting further information. It pointed out the seriousness of the current situation and the damage which had already been caused to Sub-Postmasters' business and urged POCL to treat the matter with urgency as there was a need to make prompt progress.

Irrelevant

19 GIROBANK

19(a) GIROBANK/NFSP QUALITY FORUM - CL GB 01

Notes of the Federation/Girobank Forum meeting which took place at Girobank, Bootle, on 27th January 1998 had been circulated. Two working groups had been formed:-

- (i) Mr Burford and Mrs Kendall - project dealing with error category types
- (ii) Mr Butlin and Mr Davis - project dealing with poor print quality

The aim was for the groups to meet and complete their work prior to the next meeting of the Forum scheduled for 28th April. However dates for the working groups had not yet been arranged.

19(b) WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

20 INSURANCE - CL IN

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

SION

Irrelevant

33 ORGANISATIONS
33(a) POUNC - FM 00

Nothing to report other than the next meeting to meet the new Secretary, James Dodds, was scheduled for 7th April 1998.

MR BURROWS wished to place on record his appreciation for the efforts of the Negotiating Committee and members of the Secretariat who served the Negotiating Committee. The last few months had been very difficult and he deeply appreciated their efforts.

- **THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL APPROVED the report of the Negotiating Committee.**

DECISION

A/4 CONFERENCE MATTERS

Irrelevant

(b) *Supplementary Report of the Executive Council*

- The Supplementary Report for 1997, as circulated, was amended and approved.

DECISION

(c) *Motions*

The list of Motions, including notes had been circulated. There was one Motion proposing Honorary Membership: Miss Edwina Parcell for whom the seconder, nominated from the Executive Council, was Mrs Jean Kendall.

Executive Officers representing the Regions from which the Motion emanated were requested to provide as much information as possible as to the background. The Motions were then discussed and annotated as either *Accept*, *Accept "A"* or *Oppose*. Recommendations were made as to amalgamation of Motions and those to be taken in Closed Session, first business on Tuesday morning of Conference.

MR MCMAHON advised that Motion 85, as circulated, had been withdrawn by the Branch/NWNWRC.

- During the course of debate on the Motion, the Executive Council **AGREED** to rescind Resolution 13 passed at the January Council meeting.

DECISION

(d) *Motions and Nominations Received Late*

There was one Motion received late on 2nd March, 1998, from Exeter Branch unsupported by the Regional Council. Following the closing date, John Morris, Midland Regional Council Secretary, advised that he had omitted to send in References Back for his Region.

(e) *Conference Agenda, Annual Accounts, Officers' Reports, etc*

The Conference Agenda, Annual Accounts and Officers' Reports had been circulated. The election of the National President, National Vice-President and result of the election of Editor should take place at 4.14 pm on Tuesday. The Report of the National Treasurer to be taken immediately before Clause 10, Trading Accounts.

- The Council discussed the timing of the Editor's Report to be given to Conference as it was recommended this should be before the result of the election was known and THE GENERAL SECRETARY was authorised to allocate the most appropriate place on the Agenda.

ACTION

(f) **Standing Orders Committee**

Each Region had notified the name of its Standing Order Committee representative, the Committee were to meet in London on 29 March 1998. The cost of Standing Orders representatives attending Annual Conference to be met from central funds at the same levels as reviewed in 1997, namely 2nd class rail fare and £90 per day subsistence.

- **Mr Tony Burrows, Chairman of the Negotiating Committee, was elected as the Standing Orders Committee representative from the Executive Council.**

DECISION

(g) **Official Guests**

John Denham, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Social Services, was to address Conference at 2 pm on Tuesday, 12th May. Ian McCartney, Minister of State DTI, had also been invited, a reply was awaited. Invitations had also been issued to David Sibbick and Isobel Anderson of the DTI, both of whom had accepted. Dr Neville Bain, the new Chairman of the Post Office, had been invited to speak, a response was awaited. If he was not available, then an invitation would go to Jonathan Evans. *(nb: It was confirmed later in the meeting that Dr Bain had advised he would not be present, therefore Mr Jonathan Evans was to be the speaker)* John Main, RGM Midland Region had accepted an invitation to attend, and a reply was awaited from Tim Thorpe, RGM SW&SW Region. The P&D had suggested a retailer to speak and it was possible that Professor Gary Davies of the Manchester Business School might attend and/or speak.

- **It was recommended that Prof Gary Davies be invited to address Conference on Tuesday afternoon.**

ACTION

(h) **Conference Reporting**

As accepted by the Council, the Report of Conference proceedings would be undertaken at Federation Headquarters, cost purchase of the necessary transcription equipment was £350 + overtime payment if necessary. Current distribution of the Report was: Regional Council Secretaries: 2 copies; Branch: 1 copy for each delegate, 1 copy to each Branch not attending; Honorary Members: 1 copy.

(i) **Conference Grant to Delegates (Union Facilities)**

Agreed at January 1998 EC Meeting: £125 per delegate.

(j) **Conference 1998 - Observers**

POCL to provide official observers: Jonathan Evans, Mike Granville, Tom Coleman, Evan Elliott, Kay Hartigan and Delwah Kang would be in attendance.

(k) **Tellers**

Names of tellers had been advised.

(l) **Cartoonist**

As agreed at the October 1997 EC Meeting, there would be no caricaturist for Conference 1998.

(m) ***Vice President - Order of Seniority***

In accordance with the Executive Council's Order of Seniority Minutes, Mrs Jean Kendall would be the National Vice-President for 1998-99.

Irrelevant

DECISION

DECISION

A/5 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) PUBLICITY & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. Report of P&D Committee Meeting

P&D Committee had met on 16-17 February 1998 at Leamington Spa.

**2. FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1998 - Bournemouth**

Irrelevant

(NB)

DECISION

DECISION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

DECISION

- It was also AGREED that the March 1999 Executive Council Meeting would commence on Sunday 21st March.

DECISION

FACTSHEETS

The P&D Committee had discussed the production of factsheets on the subject of selling post offices. Although it had been felt useful, it was seen as not quite the right time with other uncertainties that existed to be seen as advising Sub-Postmasters on how to sell their post offices - there being available a factsheet on resignation counselling (*No 4*).

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

P&D REPORTING AND CIRCULATION OF RELEVANT AND/OR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Attention was drawn to the circulation of information to assist discussion of topics under consideration by the P&D, MR BRENNAN suggesting that the use of orange paper to promote a speedy response when decisions were time-critical.

However, Executive Officers felt that there needed to be debate so that all sides of topics could be appreciated, but that the circulation of more background information was often required, for example, as had been requested regarding statistics on corporate/multiple membership.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SUB-EDITORSHIP OF "SUBPOSTMASTER"

MR HEASMAN advised there was still some way to go before the P&D could put proposals forward regarding the format of the "Subpostmaster" journal and the involvement of Reed Retail. In regard to queries from MRS KENDALL regarding Tim Cobb's post as Sub-Editor and the recommendations regarding the relationship with Management Advisory and a case where a Sub-Postmaster seemed to have been given the wrong advice, MR HEASMAN said he would be grateful to have the relevant information. Mr Abraham himself dealt with employer/employee advice, whereas IRPS dealt with aspects of Health and Safety and most of the letters received at Federation Headquarters indicated praise of the service received.

- There was to be a review of the operation of the Helpline and papers would be circulated to Executive Officers in good time for the October meeting.

ACTION

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

DECISION

Irrelevant

DECISION

A/6 SPECIAL MATTERS

A) MEMBERSHIP

i. Proposal for the Deregulation Order 1998 (PC HR 03)

The breakthrough in regulations regarding remandating, as promised by Government, was good news.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

(NB)

DECISION

ACTION

DECISION

A/7 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

- 95/70 CREDIT FACILITIES - SMALL BUSINESSES
- 97/53 SUB POST OFFICE AUDITS
- 97/54 ACCOUNTS PROCEDURES

All the Conference Resolution in 1997 had been captured in the Annual Report.

A/8 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1998

Dealt with under A/4.

A/9 MOTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

There were none.

Irrelevant

A/10 DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to add, apart from as noted:

(A) FOR DISCUSSION

POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED

Sub-Postmasters Contract

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|-------------|
| 1. | (a) | Christmas/New Year Arrangements 1997/98 | PC SC 05 01 |
|----|-----|---|-------------|

Subpostmasters Pay

- | | | | |
|----|-----|-------------|-------------|
| 2. | (a) | APT Schemes | PC SP 02 08 |
|----|-----|-------------|-------------|

Items under this heading transferred to A/3 - the whole payment for electronic transactions was subject of negotiations and all of the items with this reference circulated recently had the qualification that they would be the subject of further talks when Bill Payments discussions completed.

(Agenda)

POCL CLIENTS

Benefits Agency

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--------------------------------|----------|
| 3. | (a) | Benefit Payment Card | CL BA 03 |
| | - | Re-Design of Order Book Foils | |
| | (b) | Recall Notices - ALP's Offices | CL BA 06 |

MR DARVILL advised there had been a lot of aggravation in London over impounded books which took 5 days to get back to the Benefits Agency Office which problem, MR DAVIS thought, should be taken up with the local Benefit Agency.

Foreign Exchange

- | | | | |
|----|-----|------------------|----------|
| 4. | (a) | Bureau de Change | CL FX 01 |
|----|-----|------------------|----------|

Girobank

5. (a) Winter Fuel Payments

CL GB 08 12

This matter had been dealt with under A/3 of the current Agenda.

(Agenda)

Insurance

6. (a) Merger of General Accident with Commercial Union

CL IN 01

Local Authorities

7. (a) Home Help/Care Stamps

CL LA 01

Irrelevant

ACTION

ACTION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

ACTION

DECISION
ACTION

Discussion on the Future Structure/Strategy of the NFSP

MR MARSHALL reported on the deliberations of *Sub Group 1 Communications*. There had been a discussion on communicating agreements and vital information to members with suggestions for various methods, including a *Speakers' Brief* to Executive Officers and Branch Secretaries, convening of Regional meetings and/or mailing list to rest of membership as some Branch Secretaries could misuse information or give incorrect information. Also considered had been equipment for use at Road Shows where POCL usually assisted by providing a stand; but, it appeared, NFSP Trading Ltd were going to obtain a stand for use at Road Shows. Training of new Branch Secretaries had not been thought a job for Federation Headquarters at Shoreham but for Executive Officers, but they themselves could need training first. It was intended to convene another meeting of the Group at the June EC meeting.

A/13 NFSP TRADING LIMITED

- The Report of NFSP Trading Ltd as given at the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 24th March, 1998, was **ACCEPTED**.

DECISION

A/14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

Nothing reported.

A/15 MATTERS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR INCLUSION ON AGENDA

None received.

A/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

MR BRENNAN had the honour, he said, to thank the Chairman on behalf of the Executive Council for the controlled manner in which he had run the meeting - making sure all had an opportunity to put their point of view - whilst adding a touch of humour. He wished him well for the remainder of his Presidential year and at Conference.

THE CHAIRMAN thanked him and all Executive Officers for making his year as easy as it had. He stressed the importance of maintaining anonymity over which Officer was to speak on each of the various Conference Motions and he mentioned that Officers should not just wait for Federation Headquarters to provide them with notes on what should be said. He wished farewell to Mr McMahon, Mr Evans and Mr Brennan. He thanked all for their presence, looking forward to seeing them at Annual Conference.

GRO

ELAINE AUSTIN
GILL PAYNE

