

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**FOR USE OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OFFICERS ONLY**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUB-POSTMASTERS**

**REPORT OF A MEETING**

**of the**

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**held on**

**19TH, 20TH 21ST OCTOBER, 1998**

**at**

**ABBEY HOTEL, GREAT MALVERN**



# **A G E N D A**

**OCTOBER 1998**

**A/1 REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS of the**  
**Executive Council Meeting held on 15th, 16th, 17th June 1998**  
**Special Executive Council Meeting held on 7th August 1998**

**A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS**

**A/3 REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

The following reports refer:-

NC	6.7.1998	[Pay 1998]
NC/POCL	6.7.1998	[Pay 1998]
NC	20.7.1998	[Pay 1998]
NC/POCL	20.7.1998	[Pay 1998]
NC	24.8.1998	
NC	5.10.1998	*

## **POST OFFICE GROUP**

### **1. Post Office Board**

(a) Annual Report ..... PO BD 01

### **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**

- (a) Guernsey .....OI GY
- (b) Isle of Man .....OI IM
- (c) Jersey .....OI JY

**POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED**

5. **Commercial** .....PC CM

6. **Human Resources**

- (a) Training for Subpostmasters .....PC HR 04

7. **Mailwork**

- (a) Mailwork Review .....PC MP 04

8. **Network**

- (a) Network Forums .....PC NW 01
- (b) Counter Automation - BA/POCL .....PC NW 06 01
- (e) Cash and Stock Resourcing and Distribution .....PC NW 09

9. **Security**

- (a) POCL/NFSP Meetings .....PC NW 11 01 \*
- (c) Equipment .....PC NW 11 02 \*
  - Security Capitalisation and Screen 2000
  - Trial of Smoke & Dye Packs
  - Access Doors
  - Anti-intruder Alarm Grants
  - Proposed Trial of Remote Alarm Signalling

10. **Product Range** .....PC PR

11. **Quality**

- (b) Success Through Sales .....PC QY 01



12. **Subpostmasters Contract**

- (a) Contract Guidelines (Termination Procedures) ..... PC SC
- (b) Outlet Standards ..... PC SC 03
- (e) Paypoint ..... PC SC 21 01

13. **Subpostmasters Pay**

- (a) Pay Review ..... PC SP
  - Identifying costs of running an office
- (b) Pay Claim 1998 ..... PC SP/1998
- (c) Payment Rates ..... PC SP 01
  - Bill Payment

**POCL CLIENTS**

14. **Benefits Agency**

- (a) Pensions ..... CL BA 03
  - BES - 'Casual' Agents
  - All Benefits at One Post Office

15. **British Gas** ..... CL BG

16. **British Telecom**

- (a) BT Payment Cards ..... CL BT 02 \*
- (b) BT Global Calling Cards ..... CL BT 05 \*

17. **Electricity Boards** ..... CL EB

18. **Foreign Exchange** ..... CL FX

19. **Girobank**
  - (a) Girobank/NFSP Quality Forum ..... CL GB 01 \*
  - (b) Winter Fuel Payments ..... CL GB 08 12
  - (c) Giro Change Giving/Corporate Deposits ..... CL GB 08 15
20. **Insurance** ..... CL IN
21. **Local Authorities** ..... CL LA
22. **Lotteries**
  - (a) National Lottery ..... CL LO 01
    - Lottery Terminals \*
    - LSN's
    - Prize Payments
23. **Mercury Communications** ..... CL MC
24. **National Savings** ..... CL NS
25. **Personal Banking**
  - (a) Personal Financial Services ..... CL PB
26. **Payment Collection Services** ..... CL PC
27. **Parcelforce**
  - (a) RPP Parcels ..... CL PF 05 02
28. **Royal Mail** ..... CL RM
29. **Utilities** ..... CL UT
30. **DVLA** ..... CL VL

31. **Water Authorities** ..... CL WA
32. **Moneygram**
- (a) Moneygram ..... CL WU
33. **Organisations**
- (a) POUNC ..... FM OO
34. **Conference Resolutions 1998**
- 98/RB1(D) ..... One to One Transfers
- 98/RB1(K) ..... 365 day year
- 98/RB1(R) ..... Review of Mailwork Agreement
- 98/RB1(S) ..... Mailwork Local Unit Specification
- 98/2,3,4,5 ..... POCL costs
- 98/6 ..... Client Contract Negotiations
- 98/10 ..... Compensation - Cash & Stock Failures
- 98/14 ..... Network Policy
- 98/18,19,20 ..... Priority Services and Recorded Delivery
- 98/22 ..... Royal Mail Activities
- 98/23 ..... Payment for Certificates of Posting
- 98/24 ..... Cash and Stock Responsibilities
- 98/26 ..... Interim Payments
- 98/27 ..... Interim payment for new work
- 98/31 to 36 ..... Conditions of Appointment
- 98/38 ..... Liability for losses following robbery
- 98/39 ..... Appeals against recovery of losses heard outside Region
- 98/42 ..... POID activities
- 98/44 ..... Family Transfers
- 98/46 ..... MSPO Representation
- 98/50 to 54 ..... APT Machines
- 98/55 to 57 ..... Horizon
- 98/RB4(H) ..... Time away from counter following attack
- 98/64 ..... Screen 2000
- 98/65/66 ..... Central Station Monitoring
- 98/67 ..... Publicise grants for anti-intruder alarms in  
Sub-Postmaster's residence
- 98/68 ..... Trauma Counselling
- 98/69 ..... Helping Police with Enquiries

**A/3 items without correspondence:-**

3.	(a)	Post Office Counters Board .....	PO PC 02	NC
5.	(a)	Marketing Briefings .....	PC CM 01	NC
8.	(c)	Automated Payment Terminals .....	PC NW 06 02	NC
	(d)	Counter Automation - ALPS .....	PC NW 06 07	NC
		- Goodwill payment for Sub-Postmasters		
	(f)	Funding of SPSOs .....	PC NW 09 03	NC
9.	(b)	Devolution of Budget to Regions .....	PC NW 11 01	NC
		- Regional Security Forums		
	(d)	Trauma Care Programme .....	PC NW 11 03	NC
11.	(a)	Customer First .....	PC QY 01	NC
12.	(c)	Introductory Payment .....	PC SC 04	NC
	(d)	Loss of Office (Compensation Agreement) .....	PC SC 12	NC
	(f)	NIPOC .....	PC SC 28	NC
13.	(d)	Intermittent Allowances .....	PC SP 02 03	NC
15.	(a)	Quantum .....	CL BG 03	NC
17.	(a)	Scottish Power .....	CL EB 09	NC
20.	(a)	Insurance Products - National Launch .....	CL IN 02	NC
23.	(a)	Mercury One to One Pre-Pay Vouchers .....	CL MC	NC
24.	(a)	NFSP/DNS Trade Union meeting .....	CL NS 01	NC
	(b)	Marketing .....	CL NS 03	NC
26.	(a)	Vodafone / Orange .....	CL PC 04	NC
28.	(a)	Priority Services .....	CL RM 05 02	NC
	(b)	Do Not Redirect .....	CL RM 05 07	NC
29.	(a)	Energi Gas .....	CL UT 07	NC
30.	(a)	Statutory Off Road Notification .....	CL VL 04	NC
32.	(a)	Moneygram .....	CL WU	NC

**A/4 SPARE HEADING****A/5 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS****A) PUBLICITY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE****1. REPORT OF P & D MEETINGS**

27/28 July 1998 &amp; 14/15 September 1998

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>2. FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE</b>             | <b>FM AC</b>     |
| Annual Conference - 1999                           | FM AC 1999       |
| Sponsorship  |                  |
| Annual Conference - 2000                           | FM AC 2000       |
| Annual Conference - 2001                           | FM AC 2001       |
| Annual Conference - 2002                           | FM AC 2002       |
| <br><b>3. FEDERATION INTERNAL</b>                  |                  |
| <b>a) Membership</b>                               | <b>FM MS *</b>   |
| <br><b>b) Federation Letterhead</b>                | <b>FI SP*</b>    |
| <br><b>c) Membership Services</b>                  | <b>FM MS</b>     |
| Training for Branch Secretaries                    | FM MS 04         |
| Federation Helpline                                | FM MS 06         |
| <br><b>d) Federation Publications</b>              | <b>FM PB</b>     |
| "The Subpostmaster"                                | FM PB 01         |
| Tim Cobb   | FM PR 01*        |
| Members' Handbook                                  | FM PB 02         |
| <br><b>4. FEDERATION PROMOTION &amp; PUBLICITY</b> | <b>FM PR</b>     |
| <b>a) Sub Post Office Exhibition</b>               | <b>FM PP 01*</b> |

**Future Dates and Venues of EC Meetings**

January 1999	Sunday 10 - Tuesday 12 January 1999	York
March 1999	Sunday 21 - Wednesday 24 March 1999	Malvern
June 1999	Monday 21 - Wednesday 23 June 1999	Malvern
October 1999	Monday 18 - Wednesday 20 October 1999	TBA

**B) FEDERATION TRUSTEES REPORT**

**C) BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE REPORT**

## A/6 SPECIAL MATTERS

### A) MEMBERSHIP

- (i) Membership ..... FI MR
- (ii) Propaganda Reports ..... FM OG 05

### B) FINANCE

- (i) Treasurer's Report ..... FI AC 02
- (ii) Annual Conference Costs 1994-98 ..... FI AC
- (iii) Outstanding Branch Accounts ..... FI AC
- (iv) Union Facilities ..... PC HR 03

### C) JOURNAL

- (i) Editor's Report ..... FM PB 01

### D) TRADING

- (i) Eagle Star Scheme ..... FI ES

## A/7 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS PRIOR 1998

## A/8 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1998

- 98/37 ..... Introductory Payment
- 98/49 ..... POCL Strategy
- 98/60 ..... POCL Credit Card
- 98/75 ..... Emergency Helpline
- 98/78 ..... Bill Payment - Method of Payment
- 98/81 ..... Public holidays - Year 2000
- 98/83 ..... Sub Post Office Audits
- 98/84 ..... Accuracy of Instructions
- 98/87 ..... Computer Consumables
- 98/88 ..... Environmental Policy
- 98/RB6(L)/91 ..... Royal Mail Direct
- 98/92 ..... Peak Smoothing - Benefits Payments \*
- 98/93 ..... Bank Closure
- 98/99 ..... London Region \*

## A/9 MOTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr. M. Challinor, Executive Officer

"The Executive Council adopt a policy - to work with Post Office Counters Ltd. in developing a programme which offers adequate compensation in reducing the Network of Sub Post Offices as a means of strengthening the financial viability of the individual office."

## A/10 DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

### (A) FOR DISCUSSION

#### POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED

##### Human Resources

1. (a) Survey - NFSP Representation/Consultation .....PC HR 01

##### Network

2. (a) Cash Account Dates 1999/2000 .....PC NW 08 01
- (b) Helpline Review and SSL Trial .....PC NW 10

##### Product Range

3. (a) Commemorative Coins .....PC PR 07

##### Quality

4. (a) Waiting Time Measurement System for Sub-Postmasters ....PC QY 01

##### Sub-Postmasters Contract

5. (a) Minimum Standards at Post Office Counters .....PC SC 03
- (b) Christmas/New Year Arrangements 1998/99 .....PC SC 05 01

**Subpostmasters Pay**

6. (a) IDEAS Scheme ..... PC SP

**POCL CLIENTS**

**Benefits Agency**

7. (a) POCL/NFSP Liaison Meeting ..... CL BA 01

**Foreign Exchange**

8. (a) Bureau de Change Trial ..... CL FX 01

**Royal Mail**

9. (a) Royal Mail ..... CL RM 01  
(b) Format Pricing ..... CL RM 04  
(c) Priority Services ..... CL RM 05 02  
(d) Millenium Stamp Programme ..... CL RM 05 05

**A/10 (B) FOR INFORMATION**

**Commercial**

1. (a) Market Research ..... PC CM 02

**Network**

2. (a) POPOS ..... PC NW 05 05  
(b) Cash Services ..... PC NW 09 03  
    - £2 coin

**POCL CLIENTS**

**Girobank**

3. (a) Personal Account Deposits ..... CL GB 08 16 \*



**Insurance**

4. (a) Travel Insurance ..... CL IN 01  
(b) Staff Discount on Insurance Products ..... CL IN 02

**National Savings**

5. (a) National Savings Interest Rate Changes ..... CL NS 07 \*

**Royal Mail**

6. (a) Priority Services ..... CL RM 05 02  
(b) Hola! ..... CL RM 06

**Law**

7. (a) Retirement Tax Relief ..... FM LW 01

**A/11 REPORT ON CENTRAL APPEALS**

**A/12 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Open Golf Championship

Network Transformation Standards

**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**



**REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
**held on 19, 20, 21 OCTOBER 1998**  
**at the ABBEY HOTEL, MALVERN**

<i>Present</i>	Mr H Morgan Jones - National President and Chairman
	Mr I Abernethy
	Mr J Jannetta
	Mr N Bradbrook
	Mrs P M Jenkins
	Mr J E M Burford
	Mr P Jervis
	Mr A M Burrows
	Mr C Jones
	Mr A R Butlin
	Mrs J G Kendall
	Mr M Challinor
	Miss C A Lindon
	Mr M Darvill
	Mr D F Marshall
	Mr R Edmondson
	Mr J Peberdy
	Mr B G Ingham
	Mr J Willshaw

<i>In attendance</i>	Mr C Baker	General Secretary
	Mr K Davis	Assistant General Secretary
	Mr P Heasman	Assistant General Secretary

# Irrelevant

## A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS

There were no matters arising.

## A/3 REPORTS OF MEETINGS OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

MR BURROWS, Chairman of the NC, referred to the minutes of the meetings of the Negotiating Committee held on 6th July, 20th July, 24th August 1998 and 5th October 1998 which had been circulated.

### 1 POST OFFICE BOARD 1(a) ANNUAL REPORT - PO BD 01

The correspondence referred to conflicting information provided by POCL in their Report and Accounts. The letter from Tim Brown, Head Office Financial Controller, put the record straight and the information had been provided to members in the General Secretary's Notes in the "Subpostmaster". A meeting had taken place the Chairman of The Post Office and the General Secretary on 17th August 1998.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY reported there had been no agenda for the informal meeting scheduled for one hour. However, he had sketched out a number of subjects that he had wanted to discuss:

<i>Future of The Post Office</i>	<i>What the Corporation was doing in</i>
<i>Future of Horizon</i>	<i>allowing one Business to compete</i>
<i>Future of the Counters Business</i>	<i>with another (raiding parties)</i>
<i>Size and shape of the Network</i>	<i>Mailwork</i>

It appeared the Chairman of The Post Office had structured the same agenda without *Mailwork* or *What the Corporation was doing to the competition within the Business*, but he had also included *Security* and *Signage and Presentation*. Dr Neville Bain had been well briefed; it had been a good session as he had displayed an understanding of the position of Sub-Postmasters. There had been excellent discussion on all the subjects and a commitment to talk again when more was known about the political scenario. THE GENERAL SECRETARY had asked him how it felt to be the Chairman of the biggest retail network in the UK yet having to say the Business could not afford to protect staff with proper security and he had replied it did not feel good and the matter would be looked at.

MR BURROWS continued by drawing attention to the minutes and the report that The Post Office Corporation was planning a significant upheaval of the Businesses under the Corporate umbrella.

IN CONFIDENCE, THE GENERAL SECRETARY reported the discussions which had centred on the subjects of:

- |                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Privatisation</i> | 3. <i>Post Office Re-organisation</i> |
| 2. <i>Horizon</i>       | 4. <i>Vision</i>                      |

In thanking the General Secretary for his explanation and efforts in *ferreting* out information, MR BURROWS mentioned that it was right the senior representatives of the Federation should be brought up to date with developments but reiterated

that the information was confidential and should not be passed on. Post offices had 28 million people coming through their door each week and those customers had to be retained. Sub-Postmasters' investments must not be put at risk and, depending on answers to question, the Federation would have to react.

**2     GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS - PO PZ**  
**2(a)   GOVERNMENT REVIEW**  
           - INDIVIDUAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS  
           - THE MINIMUM WAGE - LOW PAY COMMISSION

There was nothing further to report on the Individual Savings Account, nor the Minimum Wage and the Federation was waiting to see the full impact the Minimum Wage would have on the network.

**- THE POST OFFICE INQUIRY - TRADE & INDUSTRY COMMITTEE**

Regarding the Post Office Inquiry, the Federation was awaiting the results of the deliberations of the various Departments in Government and particularly the Department of Trade and Industry.

A number of leaks suggested, as in *The Independent's* article, that a 49% share sale option was the one preferred by Government. This was only speculation. The Federation remained close to the Department of Trade and Industry and would be in a position to meet with the Ministers concerned as soon as an announcement was made.

It appeared, however, that the re-grading of Crown Offices which had been stopped because of a moratorium applied by the DTI was now back on the agenda. Details were awaited of the decision of the Department of Trade and Industry on precisely what was in store for the Crown Office network and the NC would report to the Executive Council when there was a broader knowledge on the subject.

**3     POST OFFICE COUNTERS**  
**3(a)   POST OFFICE COUNTERS BOARD - PO PC 02**  
**3(b)   ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT - PO PC 03**

Because of the need to devote resources into the centre working on the various requirements of the Government there had been a number of senior appointment changes which have been the result of Newsbriefs. As could be seen from the circulation, Phil Smith had taken over as temporary Regional Manager in the Midlands during John Main's secondment, and John Cooley temporarily appointed to cover for Paul Rayner as Regional General Manager in SE Region, and Bert Bertoloni had been replaced by Alex Docherty. Although a number of changes were titled "temporary" it was tradition in The Post Office for people not go back to the job they vacated.

The major proposals for POCL were those set out in *Newsbrief No. 37/98* concerning POCL's Vision resulting from the work undertaken by McKinsey. Keith Hardie would give a presentation of their Vision on Tuesday afternoon at 2 pm. However, some information could be gleaned from various publications being put out by POCL. There would be organisation development changes which will stem from Post Office Counters' Vision and the changes being planned by the Corporate Board.

**Irrelevant**

# Irrelevant

**6**     **HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**6(a)**   **TRAINING FOR SUBPOSTMASTERS - PC HR 04**

Under this heading there were 2 specific subjects related to Sub-Postmasters' training: the Transactional Knowledge Review trial which was currently underway in the Midland Region, and the trial in the South East of classroom style training. Insofar as the Transactional Knowledge Review was concerned, a written report has been received from Pam Jervis and circulated to the Executive Council for which Mrs Jervis was thanked. Mr Peberdy had also provided a verbal report along similar lines. These 2 reports and the on-going experiences in the Midland Region would be fed back to Post Office Counters when the trial was reviewed.

Correspondence of the 3 September from Kathryn Cook gave details of the current status of the trial within the South East Region. She had indicated that a full range of data on which the analysis of the trial would be made available to the Federation.



MR BURROWS advised the Executive Council that a quite separate form of training was being introduced in North Thames & East Anglia Region which involved classroom-style training but for a 4-week period. The NC was concerned that training seemed to be becoming fragmented and variations introduced on a Regional basis. It was the intention to seek to clarify the current situation and policy of Post Office Counters towards training of Sub-Postmasters in order that the Federation could ensure that Sub-Postmasters received the proper training they required to meet their responsibilities.

It was reported by MR MARSHALL that in SWSW training events were called "Awareness Events" to avoid paying Sub-Postmasters expenses - a letter had been sent to Tim Thorpe. MR BURROWS agreed with taking the matter up in the Region and asked to be made aware of the Region's reaction, ie, Tim Thorpe's *philosophy*. If there were problems in Regions they should be reported. He himself was aware of one event billed as Transactional Knowledge which turned out to be Priority Services training.

MR PEBERDY advised the Midland Region was paying for attendance as usual and MR WILLSHAW undertook to report back on the subject for the South East. MR BRADBROOK thought classroom style training was going well in the SE but it was important that Sub-Postmasters attending had the right attitude.

The Federation wanted Sub-Postmasters well trained but, MR BURROWS commented, training was an *emotional* subject. Under the old *Transactional Knowledge* training Sub-Postmasters and their staff should be paid but Sub-Postmasters often voluntarily attended Awareness events.

MR JANNETTA said although Sub-Postmasters in Scotland had been paid for Transactional training on Priority Services, the training was one week after the service had been launched.

MR EDMONDSON advised of a lack of training in the NE, particularly the Newcastle area of which THE GENERAL SECRETARY had already been advised.

# Irrelevant

**Irrelevant**



# Irrelevant

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

The result of the work being done by various Government Departments was awaited and it was hoped that very shortly there would be a decision on Horizon enabling a positive message to be communicated to the network.

The General Secretary and MR BURROWS had met with Bruce McNiven on 23 September 1998 to discuss the way in which the trial was going and what difficulties were ensuing as a result. The notes of that meeting had been circulated on 28 September 1998 together with the action points. It should be noted, however, that in Paragraph 10, the fifth bullet point referred to a 3 ft restriction - this should read a 3 metre restriction.

Correspondence dated 18 September 1998 was confirmation that the current arrangements for paying Sub-Postmasters in the trial offices would continue.

The Federation continued to remain involved in all tiers of activity with Horizon from the Government through the whole area of the trial and installation. Details were awaited from Post Office Counters on a package to assist Sub-Postmasters with any modifications required in their offices. From the work done so far there was an attempt to establish if it was possible to establish an amount per serving position which every office would be entitled to expend on Horizon modifications. Over that, consideration would be given to whether and how much a Sub-Postmaster might contribute for any significant modifications required.

As a late piece of news, THE GENERAL SECRETARY added a note of a verbal agreement following negotiating involving £millions which, he acknowledged, had yet to be confirmed in writing. The majority of surveys involved shelving and electricity work, the costs of which were being met. A minority required re-surveying and additional work. Although POCL expected offices to be up to a basic standard, if the survey identified additional modification costs, the Report Team would have the authority to spend a further £1,000, for a 2-position office a further £1,500; 3-position £2,000; 4-position £2,500, on top of sums spent on shelving and electricity work. If the work required was outside that, the Horizon Implementation Manager had the authority to authorise further £1,000 for 1-position office; £2,500

for 2-position; £3,000 for 3-position, etc, with £8,000 for 8-position office. If even this was not enough, the National Implementation Team had further authority to assist 1-position offices with £2,500; 2-position £3,500; 3-position £4,000; 4-position £4,500 up to 8-position or more £8,500. And if that still was not enough there were a number of options available. One option was for the post office to be closed and re-established in larger premises close by - in which case the Sub-Postmaster would be eligible for a payment for 26 months remuneration from the discretionary fund. A second option was relocation with the expectancy that the Sub-Postmaster would receive the maximum amount discussed to help him. A further thing that could happen was that an additional spent could be authorised for a particular post office and/or a Sub-Postmaster could apply for a grant in a newly formed safety mechanism similar to ISIS.

MR CHALLINOR was pleased to see that the positioning of the back office printer had been pursued as he did not think a location under the counter was good because dust could cause it to clog up. He challenged the practice of putting the main computer and printer on the opposite side.

MISS LINDON said she had agreed with POCL's Horizon Manager to put an update on the Horizon Programme in the journal - one article was ready for the November edition. Mark Kelly maintained that Sub-Postmasters were making modifications/upgrading their offices after the first survey, which interfered with the plans. If Sub-Postmasters were thinking of upgrading offices they should tell their RNM's before the survey took place, she had been told.

MR MARSHALL mentioned that in SWSW 20 offices planned for inclusion in the programme had been dropped because of refurbishment and 364 offices had been surveyed using the incorrect measurement of 3 ft instead of 3 metres. Would Horizon Implementation being going back to offices affected, he queried.

Returning to the question of who made the decisions, MR BURROWS advised a tier was the POCL Support person in the Survey Team. If that was not satisfactory, it was the Horizon Implementation Manager in the Region and, after that, it was a national decision. It would not be the local RNM. Regarding the 300+ offices in SWSW surveyed using 3 ft for the cable length, there were difficulties, as with the printer position attached to the main computer. The position next to the parcel hatch was often the prime position and had been thought ideal because Sub-Postmasters often did their accounting/writing work at the other/further end of the counter in the afternoon.

The length of time taken to correct the 3'/3m description had caused problems, MR INGHAM added. He had been assured that the positioning of the printer under the counter was only a trial and that people would be allowed to put the printer where they wanted it. Although he was prepared to put up with difficult circumstances for a short time, when he had said he wanted a long-term arrangement, he had been told the kit had to fit and he was being awkward. Many faced with the situation would sign, particularly when they were told, as he had been, they might be dropped out of the system. Moreover, he had been prepared to spend money to modify his office for Horizon but had not been able to get any specifications.

Operational aspects were being picked up With Bruce McNiven, THE GENERAL SECRETARY confirmed. When details were in writing they would be communicated quickly but there might be insufficient time to seek EC approval. Therefore, what he sought was approval of the verbal form.

THE CHAIRMAN appreciated the need for expediency and asked the Council for it approval of the adoption of the proposal.

- THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL APPROVED the proposal as outlined by the General Secretary verbally.

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

The Federation had been advised verbally that some 700 APTs have been delivered to offices and of those 700 over 200 have been installed with a programme rolling out to install the remainder. 76 APTs had been identified as having faults. These had now been checked, repaired and would be rolling into the network. POCL's information was they were on time with these APTs and a written definitive position was awaited.

Various faults with APT's were advised by Executive Officers. MR CHALLINOR advised of a Sub-Postmaster with 824 error notices because the *nought* on his APT did not work and he did not have a barcode reader. The case had been reported to the Region who had said no barcode reader was available, so it appeared no action was being taken to remedy the fault and the Sub-Postmaster had no choice but to process them via Pivot Code 18. MRS JENKINS advised of a similar situation where the Sub-Postmaster had not been supplied with a barcode reader and, once again, the Region said it was unable to provide one. That Sub-Postmaster was doing in excess of 100 barcode transactions per week and having to key in was entering transaction as Giros as having to key in the number would adversely affect waiting times for serving.

- Given the details of the cases, MR BURROWS confirmed action would be taken; if APT's needed repairing the work should be done.

ACTION

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

No Correspondence.

**Irrelevant**

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant



# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant

# Irrelevant



# Irrelevant

## B) Finance

### (i) *Treasurer's Report*

MR EDMONDSON advised that the Federation's accounts for the quarter ended June 1998 showed the Federation was *ticking over* but losing money: a deficit running at £110,000 per year. The Chairman of the Federation Trustees would advise on the investment portfolio. The details contained within the accounts were comprehensive and if Officers had queries which Mr Bloor had not covered, he would attempt to answer them. Since Annual Conference and the June EC, he had given attention to looking at where savings could be made and, at the end of the day, considered that meant looking at the Executive Council and Branches.

The Executive Council was the same size as when there had been 17,500 members. The membership figures were as follows: 1998 - 16,854, 1990 - 16,106, 1992 - 15,773, 1994 - 14,644, 1996 - 14,594, 1997 - 13,449, 1998 - 13,500. If membership could be brought up by 1,000 there would be no need for discussion but the Council had to face the fact that there was no *magic wand* and membership was not going to shoot up and provide the money needed.

Prepared, he had a list of what reserves Branches were holding in balance. He commented he had been surprised to see that as Bradford had some £6,000 someone doing a remarkable job. The figures showed that since 1993, apart from 1994, the amounts had risen each year and would rise again in 1998 - by some £21,000 but there would be some contribution to the Benevolent Fund and Centenary Fund. This meant that combined total figures held in balance by Branches would be some £500,000.

The total Subscription Income paid to Branches was: 1993 - £245,738, 1994 - £235,763, 1995 - £253,493, 1996 - £237,793, 1997 - £274,360 and the estimate for 1998 was £299,183.

From these figures he concluded that there were funds in the Federation and it was up to the Council as to whether to draw any back. Meanwhile, he suggested that the per capita should be reduced from 30% to 25%.

Looking at the Executive Council itself: there was currently one Officer per 1,000 members and he had considered 1:1200, 1:1400, 1:1600 and 1:1800. On 1:1800 there was no reduction in number of EO's over the previous ratio.

He had circulated a letter to Executive Officers advising of the situation in order to focus attention. He also confirmed what that letter had said, and which the General Secretary would back it up, ie, that until he had sent the letter out no-one else had seen it and it was the first time Colin Baker had seen it or anyone else at Federation Headquarters at Shoreham. Since the previous Monday he had had positive responses from Executive Officers and the one thing that had become clear was that a majority had requested him to make some recommendations - which he had previously been reluctant to do. Therefore, he had put his case to the Federation Trustees who had back him up with a recommendation that the Federation should look at one Executive Officer per 1400 members.

In answer to a query which Mr Willshaw had raised regarding Resolution 99 of 1998 and the re-establishment of a London Region, when he had put forward the recommendation/s he had not been aware of the meeting taking place in London and in fact his letter was dated prior to the date of that meeting. He had since asked Mr Darvill to convey that to Phil Gubbings because the last thing he wanted was for those in London to think his letter was some sort of reaction to what they wished.

The Trustees backed his recommendations. Anything put to the January Executive Council Meeting would, if planned properly, have time to be put to Annual Conference in May, for example, Rules changes, etc.

MR PEBERDY agreed something had to be done rapidly. He queried what impact the savings, particular those relating to Executive Officers' expenses, could have on the Union Facilities payment received from the Post Office. In relation to the recommendation of one EO per 1400 he perceived there were large areas of the country, eg, Scotland, where it would be particularly difficult for just one EO to travel around without a motorway network. Therefore, he thought a better situation would be 2 Executive Officers to a Region. Perhaps one could try to get some money back from Branches. He was concerned that the Federation should serve the membership in the right manner in size, number, internal structure, Board of Benevolence, etc - all of which carried some cost/s. It was for the Executive Council to decide the on size and structure of its own committees.

As Chairman of the Trustees, MR ABERNETHY reported the Trustees had deliberated long and hard about the matter because no one liked to be in a position where money was flowing out without doing anything. More members were needed. He had said in his report that he was willing to help any Region in any way possible. He had been pleased to see so many *wanna-be's* at the Sub Post Office Exhibition

wishing to become members. Until the membership did increase, he supported the suggestion of 1:1400 members - otherwise the Federation was living far beyond its means. Unless there was a new influx of cash, the Federation would have to *cut its suit according to the cloth*. The Trustees had been unanimous.

Northern Ireland's balance was currently £7,200. At the end of the day money held by Branches was the Federation's. The Federation was in a state and what was the money laying there for anyway? That was one of the reason he supported dropping the per capita to 25%. Conference would have to be shown that the Executive Council was *putting its own house in order* too to make that *easier to swallow*. He fully supported what the Treasurer was doing; no treasurer liked to be in the position in which Mr Edmondson found himself with more funds going out than coming in.

Turning to the amount held by Wey Valley Branch, MR WILLSHAW considered it was because the Branch had collapsed resulting in money going in, without being paid out. However, as the Branch was being reconstituted the position would change and he wondered how they would feel if asked for the money back. When he had first become an Executive Officer, some years previously, he had proposed a motion on the size of the committees. Costs would be reduced if committees only consisted of 3, instead of 5, members.

MR CYRIL JONES had seen the discussion on saving money as resting on pious hopes of increasing membership. There had been some extremely hard work to increase membership throughout the organisation but the results had been very little. People were not *dying to join*, the rationale was against increasing the membership. Personally, he would not like to be the only other Executive Officer in his Region. Any organisation which was looking at cutting, cutting, cutting was a failing organisation. The services to members provided were costing money and the Council was too frightened to go to members and say "*we want more money*". The Federation must say to members *if you want all these things, you only have to pay £7 for it*. Membership was hardly £1.50 per week. Subscription to other organisations, eg, newsagents federation, were more. The Federation was spending money contributed years ago. He suggested putting the subscription up by 25%.

MR BURFORD supported the Treasurer and Chairman of the Trustees and agreed that some of what Mr Cyril Jones had said was true. The reality was the Federation was *bleeding to death*. In the days when there had been 17,000 members, Executive Officer representation was 1:1400, now it was 1:1000. Admittedly 1:1400 in Scotland would be difficult but his colleague and he would manage. Branch Secretaries must be educated too. Referring to the reduction to 25% for Branches, he recalled having been *slaughtered* at Annual Conference when, as Treasurer, he had made that proposal - but the climate was different now and Conference might be more receptive. The point had been reached when there was little choice.

The Council had been talking about membership for 18 months, MR BUTLIN was disappointed to relate, yet nothing had happened. A Recruitment Pack had been wanted, trainers needed training, but again nothing had happened. Had the membership been given what it wanted, he asked.



Looking at a membership increase of 2,000 (as 4,000 was impossible), there was no financial (only statistical) benefit in increasing the number of community/rural office members on the lower rate. During 1998 (for SWSW) there had been 26 transfers of which 15 went into multiples. MR BUTLIN had asked the Treasurer for a list of funds of Branches. He thought Branches should be asked for 50% of the money back - particularly when they were not using it. One recommendation was to reduce Branch income and he wished good luck to whoever took that to Conference.

The Federation re-organised every time around POCL boundaries but MR BUTLIN asked rhetorically about Regions in, say, 3 years time - when there might be entirely different structures/areas to cover. With regard to the number of EO's per Region, if there were one EO full time that would create no saving at all. There could be 2 EO's per Region but he did not think that would be a guarantee of saving as their costs would escalate to cover the territory. Similarly, although he had no objection to 1:1400, but was not sure of any real long term saving. He had been flabbergasted to learn it cost £5,000 per day for the Executive Council to meet and queried whether that was value for the Federation. He could see no reason why the Council should not meet for only 2 days which would save £5,000 per meeting, £20,000 per year. Those were the things which could be done currently.

Regarding committee meetings, MR BUTLIN believed 3 members was too small to work effectively. Committees did split to cover different topics, eg, as with different aspects of Girobank and the LBU the NC split, and was doing its own housekeeping by no longer having overnight meetings - officers catching the last transport home.

Being realistic, members always wanted more, but MR BUTLIN agreed subscriptions needed to be increased or there could be a reduction in some of the benefits, such as the *Helpline*. The organisation needed financial pruning but, when pruning a tree, one did not start at the roots but by lopping back excess foliage. He was not making any recommendations as he would like to hear other comments.

MR CHALLINOR agreed with Mr Cyril Jones that subscriptions should go up to match the service members received. The Federation had one of the lowest subscription rates in the country yet provided one of the best services. He wished to see the presentation to be given by Paul Heasman following his research as there was a bigger picture to the future of the Organisation. The Federation needed a target. It did not have a plan either long-term or short-term to meet the obligations of living within its finances. He had a mission of a business plan to contain budgets, to estimate income and correctly budget and he floated that idea for future use. The Federation should review consistently and constantly. Meanwhile, it should have come as no surprise that the Federation found itself in the current straits.

Turning to per capita and a voluntary claw-back of Branch funds, MR CHALLINOR wondered whether this would bring in money in real terms or just create bad feeling. His own Branch had struggled for money in the past, convening meetings in village halls. Admittedly a free dinner had been provided at a recent event and that was totally wrong, but Shropshire was not alone in doing that; Chester Branch had ordered 50 meals when only 9 people turned up. Branches were provided with money by the per capita facility when it could be based on a percentage for the subscriptions for the Branches.

THE CHAIRMAN thought Paul Heasman's presentation should be taken as something entirely on its own and not as impacting on the measures currently being considered.

MR JANNETTA felt the debate stood in danger of *throwing the baby out with the bath water*, ie, not focusing on the problem that the Federation was spending more money than it was getting in and the prospects of future income were irrelevant if the current *drain* meant there might be no Federation in the future. With regard to the suggestion of clawing money back from Branches as a one-off, it would be difficult to do that without a *package* from the Executive Council. He could not see that the membership numbers would go up as people were not interested in organised labour. Even the Treasurer's current proposals could not be effective until Conference 1999.

Referring to what Mr Burford had said about Conference's previous rejection of the reduction in per capita rate, MR EDMONDSON felt the climate was such that there was more chance of acceptance, particularly if it could be demonstrated that the economies were not hitting just Branches.

At the request of THE CHAIRMAN, THE GENERAL SECRETARY explained Federation Rules relating to representation and said if a decline in EO numbers was agreed (say, 1:1400), according to the current rules the number of EO's would not decrease until 2000, so there would need to be a rule change for it to be effective immediately but the reduction in per capita to 25% could be brought into effect immediately.

Then, MR JANNETTA added, he recommended those measures should be undertaken as a saving now, together with a Business Plan.

MR WILLSHAW thanked Mr Edmondson for his good report. He believed subscriptions should be looked at, 1 EO per 1400 members, 25% per capita, but he did not agree with taking money back from Branches.

MISS LINDON saw that drastic action was needed. Certainly membership could not easily be increased. There was money in the Branches which was the Federation's but it would be difficult to ask for it back without a new package. She suggested a system where Branches had enough working capital to run the Branch but not give *free dinners*. People must realise the Federation was a working organisation. Branch Secretaries should be educated - that had been talked about before but not done. Executive Officers were needed - also Branch Secretaries, who needed proper laid-down training. POCL Regions constantly changed so the Federation needed to decide how many EO's there should be throughout the country and then decide which area/s each would cover bearing in mind there were difficult areas to get around, eg, Scotland. If there were, for instance, 2 EO's in Scotland and 1 in the NWNW, why could not one of those in Scotland cover, say, Cumbria. Suggestions could be radical but there was a need to look ahead. She thought a Committee should be set up to put forward a long-term plan.

It seemed to MR BRADBROOK that the same people spoke at Annual Conference every year with many other delegates making no contribution at all which meant it was perhaps for them a *glorified holiday*. "*No Conference, no Helpline*", he said, Mr Bloor often knew more to answer problems; £47,500 for Conference - (delegations should be 1:60, not 1:50 Branch members). Increase subscriptions:



13,500 x £2 = £27,000 + £47,500 for Conference = £74,500 and the reduction 2 EO = £94,500 + cut-out Keele = £100,000! He thought trying to take money back from the Branches a dangerous route to pursue. Some Branches had been prudent: his own did not pay travelling or other expenses and found the cheapest venues. London was sponsored as they had no funds. Some Branch Secretaries got £700, he himself charged nothing in fees so the money went into Branch funds.

MR DARVILL considered a large proportion of a Branch's funds did come out of payments made for Conference and there was too much money in some Branches. Subscription increases had been looked at 12 months previously but discarded because of the fight to increase membership. An awful lot of offices paid the minimum rate of £24 so if a Branch picked up 30% in per capita, money was being lost on small offices. Even the average of £24 and £84 paid by members, across the country, was £60 so to then to give back 30% nearly took up that average. He perceived that Sub-Postmasters' aspirations had changed since he first became an Executive Officer: although pay had increased, their disposable incomes had lessened. Therefore, Branch Secretaries would not attend appeals/interview in office hours because of that pressure and those imposed by POCL, ie QPA, etc, - although they were willing to attend meetings in the evening. On the other hand, members sometimes thought Federation officials were full-time and at their beck and call. Witness what was said at Conference citing the *gravy train*. Long-term measures were needed which, he thought, meant *pruning the roots rather than the top of the tree*. The Rules needed to be changed so action could be taken quickly. It was a dangerous move to try to get money back from the Branches but that money should not be used for social functions. (Some Branches had a dedicated social fund, which was OK.) When Branches had been asked for money back following the last re-organisation, many had not complied. If Executive Council Officer numbers were cut back, that could mean more travelling expenses, etc.

MRS JENKINS believed the money was given to Branches to operate for the Federation's benefit. If a Branch had £16,500, she wondered what it was doing to further that purpose. There should be no harm in asking for some of the money back and, if one did not ask, one did not get. Could not a rule be brought in proposing funding Branches to *whatever* capacity but, at the end of the financial year, any funds in excess of a certain figure should be sent back to Federation Headquarters. She herself recalled how amazed she had been about the amount of paperwork EO's were given and, although it was necessary to see the papers, she thought the cost of Executive Council meetings could be cut by having a more structured agenda in 2 rather than 3 days.

MRS KENDALL saw that no immediate decision/s could be taken to solve the problems and proposed an ad hoc committee to report back by January so that recommendations could be put to Annual Conference in May. Mr Abernethy's efforts were exceptional and Northern Ireland had enrolled 20 more members but how many Branches could say that every non-member had been visited, she wondered, and how could there be a change of culture when people did not want to join? If people did not believe in the Federation then the Federation should be wound up, offices sold, an all go home! Branches Secretaries were not educated, and not motivated. How many passed on *Reasons to Urge* interviews to EO's? If Branch Secretaries were educated, EO's would not have to travel so many miles. During her presidency next year, she did not want to be President of the Titanic!

If there was less stock on the shelves, people did not want to buy, so even less stock was needed.

MR MARSHALL thought the Council did not have sufficient information. In his letter the Treasurer had quoted a saving of £10,000 per Executive Officer but if one in a Region was dispensed with there would be inroads into expenses of other/s. Business Plans were needed for the short-term, medium-term and long-term; explanations and explorations with proper facts and figures. The membership had to be shown what was being done at Shoreham, by the Executive Council, etc. Either subscription had to be increased or services had to go.

MR BUTLIN supported the suggestion put forward by Miss Lindon and proposed Mrs Kendall for an ad hoc committee to discuss and make recommendations before Christmas for the short and long-term finances of the Federation over the entire spectrum. 5 people; possibly the General Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of the GPC and 2 others. This did not necessarily change what the Treasurer recommended.

Both MR DARVILL and MR MARSHALL supported the proposal.

At the beginning of the debate, MRS JERVIS had written down: "*We need to have a drains-up on the Federation's Executive Council - do we spend our time efficiently?*" and she expressed concern about forming another committee. The P&D had been charged with looking at the *Purpose and Format of Executive Council Meetings*, but nothing had happened. Committees sat, considered, made recommendations which were put forward and then rejected by the Executive Council. She thought a better idea was for each EO to write down thoughts and send them to the President to be collated and put to next Executive Council meeting. She was concerned that there was talk of *quick fixes*. Members, realising the Federation was in a mess, wanted to be led by example.

MR BURROWS felt Officers ideas and thoughts had been expressed during the debate. There needed to be an in-depth examination of the Federation, of alternatives, to formulate policy, to report back to the January Executive Council meeting, so that measures could be put into place by March in readiness for Annual Conference 1999. There would never be concurrence in a group such as the current one.

MR WILLSHAW was definitely against a sub committee. It should be a decision made by the whole group. The sub committee would bring its recommendations back and the debate would start all over again. He seconded a proposal of 1 EO to 1400 members.

MR CYRIL JONES did not think making policy *on the hoof* was to be recommended as the repercussions of 1:1400 went through the organisation. An ad hoc committee needed to be in a tight format. He thought it should consist of those members with a *head for figures* and, at the end of the day, the Council should accept what was recommended - otherwise the current debate would take place all over again.

MR PEBERDY was not sure that 5 members was sufficient and advocated it should be larger. Regarding Executive Officer representation, it was not clear how POCL Regions/borders/organisations would be defined in the future. It had been said that the funds in Branches belonged to the Federation; strictly speaking they belonged to the members as it was they who had given the money - which the Federation had then put back into the Branches for the benefit of the membership.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY listed 3 suggestions as having been raised: (i) ad hoc committee to consist of 7 people, (ii) 1 EO per 1400 members, (iii) reduction in per capita from 30% to 25%.

MR BUTLIN did not believe that he had specified the number of people on the committee should be 7, and commented the Council had spent £1,500 that morning in discussing the subject.

THE CHAIRMAN quoted the proposal as being that *"An ad hoc committee be appointed to discuss and make recommendation for the short and long term finances of the Federation"* - to consist of 7 members.

MR EDMONDSON in referring to what had been said, and in relation to a Business Plan, pointed out that the Federation's income was largely dependent upon membership, the next tranche normally coming from the Post Office in the form of Union Facilities and he had awaited that information before writing his letter. Expenditure was exceeding income. There had been some good ideas but the crux was that decisions, to bring in income or save income, would affect the federation and the right message must be sent out. Following on to what he had said at Conference, the figures which he had produced had been researched. The Federation knew what it spent, there was a surfeit of information. He was sorry to say he perceived a *shirking* of the issue. True, it was not known how/what the Regions would be in the future but the Federation had to act on what it knew now. Although it would have been beneficial to have put subscriptions up, that had not been advisable last year because of the membership crisis. Some Branches might give some money back voluntarily, others would not and if forced to do so would spend it! Some Branches did give free meals but were probably doing so to draw people in. He had drew Officers attention to questions/alternatives at the last 2 meetings, for instance, the Federation *Helpline* which members had wanted but was it being used wisely. If the Council was throwing everything back into an ad hoc committee, it was sending out the wrong signals. It should be sending out the message that the Federation was taking action.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY understood Mr Edmondson's dilemma but pointed out that having an ad hoc committee did not conflict with the 1 per 1400 proposal.

- **THE CHAIRMAN took a vote on the proposal THAT an ad hoc committee be appointed to discuss and make recommendations on the short term and long term structure and finances of the Federation and make proposals which was ACCEPTED (10 for and 7 against).**

DECISION



MR EDMONDSON put forward his proposal to include 1 EO per 1400 members and a reduction in per capita to Branches from 30% to 25%, which was seconded.

MR BURFORD could see no harm in giving the ad hoc committee a steer and felt the Treasurer should have the Council's support as it seemed there was some reluctance to *grasp the nettle*. MR CYRIL JONES advocated not limiting the ad hoc committee before its deliberations and MR BUTLIN, whilst agreeing the Treasurer should be supported, could not see it was necessary to bind the committee by making an immediate decision. MR JANNETTA backed the Treasurer's proposal as otherwise he felt the committee might *run all over the place*.

The proposal was put to the Council by THE CHAIRMAN and lost.

- There was then a discussion of the constituents of the Ad Hoc Committee in which it emerged that it should consist of 7 Executive Officers, decide its own terms of reference, and report in writing in good time for the January 1999 Executive Council Meeting. **Following a ballot vote, held later in the meeting, the following were elected as members: Mr Abernethy, Mr Burford, Mr Burrows, Mr Butlin, Mr Edmondson, Mrs Kendall and Mrs Jervis.**

DECISION

- The Treasurer's Report was ACCEPTED.

DECISION

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# Irrelevant

A/4

MR HEASMAN'S PRESENTATION TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

At the June Executive Council meeting Mr Heasman had been charged with a project to  
~~scope the potential commercial activity reporting back to the full Executive Council at the~~

**Irrelevant**

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## Federation Helpline

MR MORGAN JONES drew to the Executive Council's attention circulation's they had received of financial details of two organisations' proposals. The continuation of the current system with Peter Abraham and IRPC, and secondly the one from Membership Services Direct. The latter was marginally cheaper but it had been decided to recommend continuing with the current arrangement because it was known. It was felt that Peter Abraham provided added value by visiting branches, conference and the exhibition, and the relationship between his organisation and the Federation produced an income which reduced the difference in the two quotes to a nominal level. If the numbers of members opting for the Contract of Employment service continued to rise, then the income that produced could ultimately make the overall relationship with Peter Abraham cheaper than it would be with Management Services Direct.

The third option would be to cancel the helpline altogether. However, it was THE COMMITTEE's view that the numbers using it were continuing to rise and it was increasingly seen by members, whether they used it or not, as a valuable benefit of membership. THE COMMITTEE therefore considered it would be unwise to cancel it.

Bearing in mind the Federation's current financial situation MR BRADBROOK wondered whether the helpline should be cancelled and the calls be dealt with by Philip Bloor at Shoreham. MR EDMONDSON asked for a break down of the types of calls that Peter Abraham received. How many were there about The Post Office, Tax, and Insurance, and what proportion did he refer to IRPC?

MR HEASMAN reported that approximately two thirds of all calls were dealt with by Peter Abraham because they fell within his personal experience about contracts of employment and employment law. The remainder were referred to IRPC and covered most other areas. A detailed analysis could be obtained if necessary, as Peter Abraham recorded all the calls. He advised that the possibility of Philip Bloor handling the queries regarding tax and other areas within his responsibilities had been investigated but the percentage of these types of enquiries were minimal and therefore any saving made would be minimal. He reminded the Executive Council that they were receiving a service that operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year,



which, of course, Philip Bloor could not provide. It would also be impossible for Shoreham to cope with the 4,000 calls it was anticipated would be received should the whole helpline operation be transferred to Shoreham.

MR BUTLIN was happy to accept that The Committee had checked the market and recommended what they considered to be the best option, Peter Abraham had saved him and other sub postmasters thousands of pounds.

- **He therefore proposed that his offer be accepted for a further year. This was seconded and CARRIED.**

DECISION

MR MORGAN JONES urged the Executive Council, when attending branch meetings or any other, to stress to people that every sub postmaster who employed staff must provide them with a Contract of Employment. The majority of people were not aware that they could be prosecuted if they didn't comply to this legislation.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY reported that Peter Abraham wanted the Federation to put their brand on two contracts for holiday reliefs:

1. To cover cases where a holiday relief didn't turn up. At present nothing could be done about this as reliefs were only on a verbal contract. Once produced the contracts could be held at Shoreham and provided to members as part of the Membership Services package.
  2. The introduction of a contract whereby an individual assistant could be held personally responsible for shortages in the till.
- **MR MORGAN JONES advised that these could be agreed and offered as a Federation Service.**

ACTION

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## GRO

GILL PAYNE  
LESLEY HARRIS