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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 May 1982

Dear Sir Peter,

It was good of you to send me a copy of the recent ASLEF Presidential Address.

This makes very depressing reading. If only the effort which - quite inappropriately and unnecessarily - goes into staking out a political position were to go into improving and modernising the railway!

Yours sincerely
Raymond Storer

Sir Peter Parker, M.V.O.

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British Railways Board

Sir Peter Parker MVO
Chairman

cc: O/Transport
Mr. Vanehal
✓ 25/5

24th May 1982

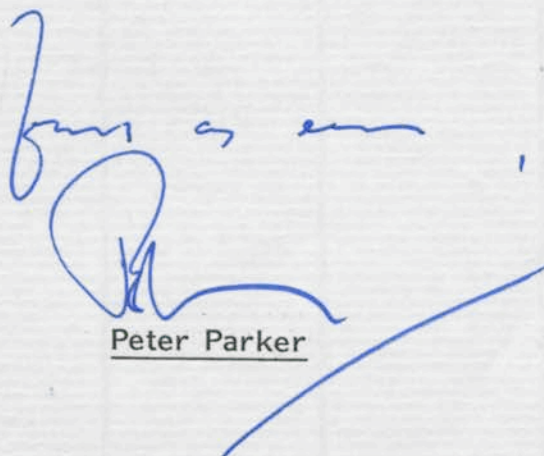
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP.,
No. 10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

Dear Prime Minister,

With the even more extreme form of piracy that you are dealing with immediately, this speech by the President of ASLEF is secondary stuff. But I did feel it would be worthwhile, when you have a moment, to see the quality of the opposition that we are facing in the ASLEF Executive, heavily dominated from the Left, and led by a President who sees his role in political terms.

The damage that ASLEF is doing to our customers, and indeed to the whole thrust of the modernising of the railway, is formidable.

The point of sending you this speech is simply to show the thoughts and the forces at work (if that is the word) in the mind of the ASLEF leadership. We are on the attack against this maddening intransigence, and whatever the duration of the war, we will win.



Peter Parker

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE MIDDAY
TUESDAY 18 MAY 1982

ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

P R E S I D E N T I A L A D D R E S S

by

MR D F FULLICK (WATERLOO)

AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES - LONDON

18 MAY 1982

ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

P R E S I D E N T I A L A D D R E S S

by MR D F FULLICK (WATERLOO)

AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES
ASLEF HEADQUARTERS LONDON - 18 MAY 1982

Fellow Delegates

It is a pleasure and a privilege to welcome elected representatives to the 1982 Annual Assembly of Delegates. I do so in the knowledge of the responsibilities that we must all shoulder in debating and reaching decisions on crucial matters which are very much in the forefront of the minds of the members whom we represent and will profoundly affect their livelihood and wellbeing.

Delegates of the Society's membership have assembled today at a time of crisis in our national and international affairs. In the past month the British Government has taken up the military option and committed our country's armed forces to battle in the South Atlantic and at home the reactionary administration of Margaret Thatcher has declared war on the Trade Union Movement.

Events of recent times have enforced our knowledge that the Government's policies are based on 19th Century precepts with the Employment Bill, drafted not in order to improve industrial relations but as a key weapon to attack the Trade Union Movement.

The incompetence of Government Ministers in failing to act on information that an invasion of the Falklands was imminent brought us to war with Argentina, with the inevitable loss of life and sacrifices by so many involved in the conflict. The action of the military junta should have been foreseen and whilst

it must be condemned, our Movement must continue in its endeavours to bring peace and ensure that the rights of the Falkland Islanders are paramount in seeking a just solution.

This is not the time for inquests, though they will come later, but it should be borne in mind that when the Argentine Government took up a military option it was faced with internal political strife. That state of affairs was not dissimilar to that facing the British Government. Students of history will know that many unpopular regimes have been sustained by artificially created waves of patriotic fervour. So the Labour Party leadership was correct when it refused an invitation to be briefed on events in order that its voice of criticism could be stifled by Privy Council responsibility.

There can be no just and lasting solution through the use of military force and it is imperative that the Trade Union and Labour Movement should speak out and act in order to highlight the Tory war hysteria which is little more than a diversion from the real problems facing the British people. The Scottish Trades Union Congress has given a lead by calling in question the policies being followed by the British Government. A unanimously adopted resolution said that any settlement must safeguard the citizenship rights of the Falkland Islanders and emphasised the key role which the United Nations must play in the negotiating process.

Our Government has turned to others for aid but we must be wary that it does not put our nation's future in hock.

A lack of foresight led to the Falkland crisis and it is, therefore, necessary to question whether the British Government has taken account of the options open to us when hostilities cease. So many military ventures have floundered on over stretched resources and intolerably long supply lines. If victory is achieved, will we maintain a permanent and adequately equipped base some 8,000 miles from home? The price would be high and Government policies may not be entirely dissociated from the interests of investment in multi-national companies, so we must be careful not to sacrifice

our social services and the welfare of our community in order to advance the interests of those who do not live or work in either Britain or the Falkland Islands.

History never exactly repeats itself but there are some parallels with the last occasion that Britain went to war, in order to regain control over the Suez Canal. There is a remarkable similarity with the press hysteria at that time and the same newspapers that were stoking up patriotic fervour are today resorting to popular jingoism.

Following the Suez debacle our defence strategy was rethought and the 1957 Defence White Paper propelled Britain into the hideous nuclear missile game. So we must bear this in mind and ensure that when peace is once more firmly restored we do not move away from our commitment to nuclear disarmament and the removal of nuclear bases from British soil.

The last twelve months have been the emergence of what has been suggested as a new force in British politics, namely the Social Democratic Party. But it is a party whose leadership is made up of political mavericks. They profess a commitment to social justice whilst turning their backs on Socialism. It is a party without a base and has in its ranks a number of former Labour Party colleagues who have not had the political will or stamina which is necessary if we are to achieve a more just society.

But do not let us shed tears for what they have done, as we should all rejoice in the knowledge that the Labour and Socialist cause will be better served by their defection. The Movement's ranks have been purged of those who may well have hindered progress and turned the Labour Party away from its goal of Socialism.

Unemployment in Britain continues to mount. It is now at crisis level

with those registered as being out of work exceeding 3 million but the true figure is far in excess of that number. What greater indictment can there be of monetarist policies than the fact that there are now more people out of work than at any time since records began in 1886.

Many workers are on short time and the number of working hours lost when added to the registered unemployed gives an overall job shortage of over 4 million. Unemployment has hit virtually every section of the population and none, apart from the very rich, has escaped. In some areas the rate has reached as high as 74% and even in the comparatively affluent South East Region, in some areas 42% are unemployed.

The misery and hardship of those without work is not confined to a decreasing standard of living because long-term unemployment brings with it degradation and a growing realisation that the community no longer has use for skills which have been so painstakingly acquired.

The misery and hardship of unemployment can only be fully understood by those unfortunate enough to have had first hand experience but more and more people are now gaining that experience with 1 in 4 of the unemployed being without a job for over a year. Half of those who have been unemployed more than a year are over 55 years of age. In the past they have served our nation well but to our present Government they are little more than a number in a statistic. It should also be borne in mind that 1 in 4 of the long-term unemployed are under 25 years of age and yet our reactionary administration with its allegiance to monetarism has provided little of constructive benefit to encourage those upon whom our country must depend in the years ahead.

Associated with the young and old as particular vulnerable groups are the ethnic minorities who have made Britain their home, so often through the encouragement of Governments who stimulated them to come to Britain in order to serve industrial interests.

With such a background it should have come as no surprise when social unrest manifested itself in so many of our cities during the summer of 1981. Discrimination, lack of purpose and the indifference of a Government which

had turned its back on social welfare, brought rioting to our streets. Yet it was a Government professing a commitment to law and order which created the conditions which led to social unrest and lawlessness in many of our inner cities.

The Government believes that a vast pool of unemployment will decrease the power of the Trade Union Movement and profit the multi-national companies but it has created a ground-swell of social unrest and bitterness with further street violence an inevitable consequence of the Government's indifference.

The Manpower Services Commission estimate that unemployment costs the tax payers well over £4,000 a year for each person who is out of work and the total bill for 1981 amounted to £12 billion. This year that bill is likely to rise to well over £14 billion. So any Government attempt to cut public spending and reduce borrowing must be self defeating. Every cut that is made reduces production and pushes more into the dole queue.

No final solution will be found to the problem of unemployment until there has been a redistribution of the nation's wealth. Stress has been laid on the very wide disparity between that small number of people who hold such a large proportion of the nation's assets and the vast majority who are dependent upon them, often for the right to work. We must, therefore, be working through all means at our disposal to ensure that the next Labour Government introduces legislation in line with the decisions made at the Party's Annual Conferences. It is only by effective monetary control and the redistribution of the nation's wealth that conditions will be created for full employment.

It is not desirable nor is it the purpose of a Presidential Address of Welcome to make comments which will influence discussion to come. Within the Executive Committee Report is a section which deals with the Trades Union Congress's campaign against the Government's Employment Bill, which will undoubtedly shortly be transcribed into an Act and placed on the Statute Book.

But I am certain that I am not being contentious or influencing the debate to come when I re-emphasise that the Tebbit Bill is nothing more than a deliberate attack on the Trade Union Movement and that it was designed with the objective of reducing trade union effectiveness. Our Movement is not seeking confrontation but it must be made clear that trade unions will not flinch from battle in order to resist the imposition of iniquitous legislation. The Tory Party has no desire to improve industrial relations and the Bill is merely an attempt to shackle unions and make them ineffective in the defence of their membership.

I am certain that the campaign which was mounted against this Society during its dispute with the British Railways Board was a prelude to action which will embroil the wider movement during the months ahead. From comments made it became clear that there was a growing realisation of this fact amongst many trade unionists and it is therefore a pity that a few national trade union leaders could not set their sights beyond the narrow confines of parochialism.

The TUC is marshalling and co-ordinating the efforts of affiliated trade unions in order to resist the reactionary legislation. None in our Movement should stand aside because the dangers inherent in the Bill are clear for all to see. As the TUC itself has said, if trade unionists have any doubts about the present Government's hostility, then surely they must have been removed when the Bill was published in January of this year. The Government is proceeding step by step in its determination to weaken and break the power of the Trade Union Movement and the Bill is specifically designed to deplete the effectiveness of unions to organise and negotiate on behalf of their members. The measures provided by the Bill have been constructed in order to financially weaken our movement. But whilst we must be resolute in our determination to organise effective resistance, we must be on our guard. Make no mistake, those who hold sway in our Courts will have the power to impose damages which, if accepted without challenge, could financially cripple the Trade Union Movement.

Our Union has accepted and indeed endorsed the action of the TUC in proposing that the General Council be empowered to impose on affiliated unions a levy in order to establish a campaign defence fund to meet the financial demands arising from the proposed legislation. It is right that should have been done but let us not believe we can meet the levy and rest comfortable in the knowledge the TUC has the power to safeguard its affiliates' interests.

Trade unionists are law abiding citizens but that does not mean they will be subjugated by discriminatory legislation. Civil disobedience is a form of popular protest which has not found a great deal of favour in the past but it is action to which we may have to resort, because there comes a time when unfair laws impose unacceptable burdens. The right to organise and negotiate freely are basic liberties which have been gained by the struggles of our predecessors and when such freedoms are threatened by laws of deliberate intent, then we must as trade unionists be prepared to stand and be counted and unflinchingly meet the challenge.

As I have said, the defence fund is a necessary part of our campaign but we must ensure that the TUC does not merely become a collecting agency for the payment of fines. There are other and more direct ways to ensure justice. We must make it perfectly clear from the outset that if one of our colleagues should be committed to prison, the total trade union movement should use its combined industrial strength in order to secure the release of those imprisoned for upholding basic human rights.

There must be no standing aside by any within the Movement as unjust and unacceptable laws must be resisted, as must the Government's attempt to turn the clock back to a time when workers were forced cap in hand to their employers.

Transport in our Capital has already fallen victim to our country's legal processes. A Socialist administration was elected with a clear mandate to change the structure of London's public transport services and to bring order out of chaos. Transport policies advocated in a manifesto and later

introduced are commonplace in many major cities on the continent of Europe.

Nearly every principal city in the world recognises that a cheap, efficient public transport service is essential to its well-being, in order to get people to work, to school, to friends, to the shops and home again. Those cities spend generously in subsidising services. Public transport subsidies in New York and Brussels, cities not known for their adherence to Socialist policies, provide subsidies of 72% and 70% respectively. The subsidy for Milan is 71% and that for Paris 56% and London with its "Fares Fair Policy" was only providing 46% at the time of the Law Lords decision.

But Tories in our midst, who are selective in their adherence to democracy, went to law and the judiciary in the House of Lords judgment upheld a Court of Appeal decision which invalidated the budget necessary to implement the cheap fares policy. The Law Lords produced a judgment based upon an interpretation of a Parliamentary Act. So I pose the question, where should power lie? Through the ballot box or in the hands of a small number of appointed people?

It is sometimes said that those charged with the responsibility of administering the legal process are divorced from the realities of life. Whether that is true or not I do not know but I am aware of the fact that very few, if any, of those who hold high judicial office had personal experience of the working class movement during their formative years. So let us be in no doubt that any necessary interpretations and applications of the proposed legislation contained within the Employment Bill will not be conditioned by first hand experience of trade unionism.

Delegates, you have before you within the Report of the Executive Committee, a comprehensive statement on the developments which have taken place and the campaign it is proposed should be waged against the Law Lords decision which will lead to London's public transport subsidy being reduced to 12%.

Trade Unions with members employed by London Transport have taken

steps to organise and co-ordinate a campaign as part of a commitment to an integrated and co-ordinated transport policy. The effectiveness of the "Day of Action" on 10 March, when there was a total shut-down of London Transport services, demonstrated the determination of trade unionists to defend their rights. So we must not weaken from our commitment to that campaign and there is no doubt in my mind that the delegates to this Annual Assembly will re-affirm our Union's allegiance to the attaining of a national integrated transport system.

The evil hand of monetarism was clearly evident in the recent dispute on British Rail. The Rail Board's approach to productivity is conditioned by an obsession to shed staff without thought for the long-term consequences of such action on our industry, the nation's broad transport policy, the staff who leave and the staff who remain. In our evidence, the Railway Staff National Tribunal was told that if British Rail's estimate of a loss of about 4,000 posts is correct, the cost to the country of keeping those 4,000 people fed, housed and clothed on the dole will be in excess of the comparatively trivial savings British Rail hopes to achieve.

Our membership was pilloried for the action that it took. But it is a sad reflection on trade union principles that individuals within the wider movement by their public utterances ably assisted the well orchestrated campaign of hate which was being directed through the capitalist press towards all those within our ranks. Now the workshops of British Rail are threatened with closure and whilst we are being blamed for the loss of work, it is the industrial recession, enhanced by Government policies and cutbacks, that has led to the decline of railway business. It is now, rightly, being very firmly said, by other trade unionists, that industrial action will be taken in order to preserve the jobs of those threatened with redundancy and I would not criticise any Union for that.

The tide of British Rail is now running at a low ebb and the Chairman of the Railways Board, seeking to divert attention from his political paymasters, quickly sought a scape-goat from outside management ranks. In his report for 1981, the Board Chairman said that it was the ASLEF strikes which had disrupted the industry's progress of recent years but that he was not deterred from the objective of modernising the railway system and to give better value for money by being a competing railway. But the Board and the Government should take

note that our Union will never be a party to any competitive arrangement whereby workers are required to subsidise an essential industry and necessary social service in order to reduce costs. Let the burden of taxation fall more heavily on those who are well able to make a greater contribution to our ailing industries.

In his Address to the 1981 Conference, the then President of the Executive Committee made reference to the need for increased investment, saying that without it, 3,000 miles of track are in danger of being condemned on the grounds of safety by the year 1990. It was in May 1980 that Parker warned the Government that if the current level in investment is continued for a decade, then it would bring the gradual collapse of the railway network, with track becoming unsafe and increasing failures in the signalling system. The watershed year is stated as being 1983 and if major expenditure on replacement is not started by then, the inevitable consequences would be a rapid rundown of the whole railway system.

In a recent article in the "Observer", Robert Taylor stated, "The omens are not good for British Rail. A new Cabinet Committee of hardline Ministers to cover the nationalised industries was formed recently. Mrs Thatcher is Chairing it and she has Parker and the railways firmly in her sights."

So it is significant that on 31 March, Mr David Howell, the Transport Secretary announced in the Commons the decision to cut the level of public support to the railways over the coming year. The public service obligation has been fixed at £15m less in real terms than in 1981 and some £81m less than British Rail had sought. The British Rail response to the Minister's decision was "tough but manageable". That comment has been referred to as diplomatic. Surely the time for diplomacy by the British Railways Board in its approach to the Government should be at an end.

British Rail Management should be taking a firm stand, not against the Unions but with those in Government who appear to be determined to disband our industry by attrition, despite assurances previously given that there was no intention to reduce the size of the rail network. It may well be, though, that the flaccid comments were conditioned by a desire to shed staff at lower levels and retain the managerial ranks intact.

One victim of British Rail's lack of funds is the much heralded Advanced Passenger Train which is to be abandoned for the time being because too many faults have developed. The revolutionary design could well have transformed British Rail's financial prospects and its successful introduction to service would have enabled far higher speeds to have been achieved, without huge investment in new track. But shortage of funds delayed its introduction and now appears to have led to its abandonment. A short sighted policy, which will undoubtedly have an adverse affect on the future business of British Rail, as will the decision to close that vital electrification link over the Pennines, the Manchester/Sheffield/Wath line.

Delegates, the Executive Committee has placed before you a detailed and comprehensive report on the events which culminated in the Railway Staff National Tribunal taking evidence from the parties to the Machinery of Negotiation on 15 and 16 March of this year. The solidarity of our membership in its industrial campaign with 17 days of strike action was an outstanding demonstration of the determination of locomotive staff to resist the imposition of unworkable practices.

By its resolution, the present generation of footplate staff has shown that it is fully prepared to fight for trade union rights as did its predecessors. So the BRB must, if it wishes to run a successful industry, not delude itself because the strength of feeling which exists in our ranks will again be transformed into action should the need arise.

I make these comments in the knowledge of what is contained in RSNT Decision No 77. The Chairman of the Board does not have a full understanding of the duties of staff who work in the footplate line of promotion because if he did, he would have a greater appreciation of the reasons for the solidarity of those who make up the membership of ASLEF.

ASLEF did not need a closed shop agreement to enrol within its ranks 98% of those eligible for membership, a higher proportion than at any time in the past. Footplate staff need specialist representation in a job which is demanding in every sense of the word and the Chairman of the Board would serve his industry better if he took account of the reasons for those facts.

The findings of the members of the Railway Staff National Tribunal as set down in their Decision No 77 ran to over 50 pages and it was stated at the outset of the Decision that the members of the Tribunal considered it to be the most difficult reference that they have had to deal with since their involvement with the RSNT. It was further said that it was the most complex and far reaching since Decision No 42 which was published in 1974. Yet, underlying the Tribunal's decision is Government policy and it is interesting to refer to what is set down in Paragraph 120, namely:-

"It should be said that we see no reason to doubt that the economic and financial position of the railways is as stated by the Board and summarised at paragraph 99. That is to say, the Board is justified in believing that if they are to obtain the essential capital for investment and modernisation which they require from government, they must be able to demonstrate that they are making progress in implementing the 1981 understanding on productivity."

I do not want in this Presidential Address to make comment which may influence debate to come. The Tribunal in its recommendations has set out safeguards and criteria to be observed when the parties negotiate more flexible rosters at national level. But regardless of safeguards, there are two major principles involved which, if given up, would not be compatible with past Society policy, namely the relinquishment of the guaranteed eight hour day and an extension of single manning to turns beyond eight hours. The Executive Committee had these principles firmly in mind when it rejected Decision No 77 as totally unacceptable and it will now be for delegates to pass their own judgment on the recommendations which have been made.

During recent months there have been major developments in the industrial relations field. I have commented on the Employment Bill and there is no doubt that the approach of Management to industrial relations has been conditioned by the Government's policy of confrontation. A former Conservative Government placed on the Statute Book the Industrial Relations Act in an attempt to make collective agreements legally enforceable and it was drafted on the false premise that it was only trade unions which resorted to such measures. But as we know from our own experience on the railway industry, it is Management who wish to discard negotiating procedures if they do not suit their purpose and it was of deep concern when reports were being carried in certain sections of our national press that if the Tribunal did not award

in the Board's favour, then Railway Management would take action to discard arbitration as well.

Surely the solidarity of our membership during the period of industrial action will have now convinced the Railway Management that provocation should have no part in industrial relations. Our membership was unflinching in its support of the action instituted by its leaders and that is all the more commendable because of the unprecedented campaign waged through the media to discredit our Union. The considerable resources of the Press and Publicity Department of the BRB were used to influence public opinion. Inaccurate reports and misleading advertisements became the stock in trade of our national press and some waged a personal vendetta against our General Secretary.

Within this Office there are nine large files which contain the public correspondence and bear testimony to the hate which was aroused. Press freedom was abused and reporting was not in keeping with the National Union of Journalists' code of conduct which says "That a journalist shall strive to ensure that the information disseminated is fair and accurate."

There were a few notable exceptions which gave prominence to the facts. Naming Labour Weekly, Morning Star, New Socialist and Tribune, I do so in order that those publications may receive support from our Movement which is so necessary for their survival in a commercially dominated field.

Every endeavour was made to increase public awareness of our members' case and the response from the Labour and Trade Union Movement showed an understanding of the deeper issues. Messages of support and solidarity were heartening and donations which were received from a wide cross section of our Movement were of great assistance and provided confirmation that the rank and file members, as well as national leaders, had an appreciation of what was at stake.

The action of trade unionists in the print industry by the many generous donations which were made showed that the workers themselves not only wished to be associated with the struggle but were concerned by the action of those responsible for editorial policy to actively promote a campaign of hate and abuse. The miners as always were quick to respond to any attempt to

transgress trade union principles. Both by donation and industrial participation, they confirmed their allegiance to the common bond which unites workers in two essential and demanding industries.

Our Society is numerically small yet a Union is not judged on numbers alone. The policies which we have followed and our adherence to trade union principles have earned respect throughout the Labour and Trade Union Movement, both in this country and abroad. Our participation and leadership in the International Seminar of Railway Workers has brought together and cemented relationships between trade unions in all parts of the world and has made a major contribution to the dismantling of those barriers which have, for far too long, divided Eastern and Western philosophies.

Events of recent times have reinforced the need for countries to work for peace and a more settled world will only be achieved if workers' representatives are able to meet together in order to discuss problems which are common to all. ASLEF has never been selective in its approach to international relations and this policy has been firmly advocated by our General Secretary as a member of the International Committee of the Trades Union Congress, where his work has made a major contribution towards peace and detente.

The decision, which was taken by the Executive Committee during the latter part of last year to curtail our endeavours in the field of international relations, may have been misconstrued. It was a hard decision to take but priorities had to be determined and our Union was joined in critical negotiations with the British Railways Board. It was, therefore, decided that it would be unwise and not serve the interest of our members if the Executive Committee was depleted in numbers when crucial decisions were taken. Events showed that our judgment was correct but that period was only a temporary break and we must now resume our role in the cause of international trade unionism.

The Sixth International Trade Union Seminar of Railwaymen held in Belgium in May of last year determined that the Seventh Seminar should take place in Prague in May 1983. Our colleagues of the German Federal Republic were charged with the organisation of the Working Party of the Seminar but a short

time ago we were told that because of internal trade union problems, they were now presented with difficulties in organising the arrangements previously scheduled for June. Our colleagues in Germany are concerned that the work of the Seminar may be put at risk and clearly there is a need for a lead to be taken.

The Executive Committee has, therefore, decided that enquiries should be made with the object of ensuring that the Working Party meets to prepare for the Seventh Seminar, as delay or postponement would be a set-back to the cause of international co-operation. Should it not be possible for our German colleagues to overcome their difficulties, then the Executive Committee believes that our Union should accept the responsibility of making the arrangements for the Working Party, as a positive contribution to international trade unionism.

Our standing as a union within the TUC was marked last year when the Men's Gold Badge was awarded to George Capel, who was then a member of Exeter Branch. It may well be said that the Gold Badge, which is eagerly sought after by so many trade unionists is the premier accolade of the Trade Union Movement. George Capel devoted his life to the Labour and Trade Union Movement and all those who had the privilege of meeting him would be well aware of his dedication to the Movement and his willingness to help his fellow workers.

But the Badge, and I know George would have been the first to acknowledge this, was awarded to him not only for the work which he had done but as a testimony to the part which our Society has played in the Labour and Trade Union Movement and its adherence to the principles of trade unionism. It was tragic that George died before he was aware that he had been awarded the Badge and it fell to his widow, Joyce, to accept the Badge on his behalf from the Chairman of the TUC at the 1981 Congress. As Mrs Capel told the Congress, the day of presentation would have been one of the greatest moments in her husband's life. She said that she realised how much he was dedicated to the Movement and that his commitment never wavered despite the difficulties that he had to face and the pain and discomfort he suffered during the last years of his life.

Joyce Capel has recognised how proud ASLEF was to have within its ranks such a person as her husband. She has, in an act of great generosity, decided that the Badge should be handed to our Union for safe keeping and to enable present and future members of our Union to have the opportunity of seeing the Badge on those occasions that they visit Head Office.

So Joyce has been asked to come to London during the period of our Conference in order to officially present the Badge. I am sure all of you here today will be proud if it is possible for her to join us on what will be a unique occasion, as no other member in our history has been so honoured.

In conclusion, I wish you success in your deliberations and I do so in the knowledge of the importance to our fraternity of the decisions you will be called upon to make.
