



Prime Minister / *as has England
has Pakistan*

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9/3*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Minister of State for Social Security and the Disabled

W Rickett Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

8 March 1982

Dear Willis

When the Prime Minister met the National Pensioners' Convention Steering Committee on 18 February it was agreed that Mr Rossi should write to Mr Willis, Chairman of the Steering Committee setting out the Government's estimate of the cost of implementing the proposals in the "Declaration of Intent". Mr Rossi has now written to Mr Willis and I enclose a copy of his letter.

[Handwritten signature]

Yours

Angela

ANGELA LINGWOOD
Private Secretary

Enc



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From the Minister of State for Social Security and the Disabled

Norman Willis
Secretary
National Pensioners' Convention
TUC
Congress House
Great Russell Street
LONDON
WC1B 3LF

8 March 1982

Dear Mr. Willis,

As promised, when the Prime Minister and I met the deputation from the National Pensioners' Convention on 18 February, I am writing about the cost of implementing the proposals of the Convention's Declaration of Intent. First may I say that we both welcomed very much the opportunity our meeting gave to hear the Convention's views and to explain the Government's policies for protecting the living standards of pensioners.

I am sure you will appreciate that it is not possible to put specific cost on some of the Convention's proposals. However, we estimate that the overall public expenditure cost of the package would be in the order of £15-20 billion a year. I enclose a table which sets out available estimates of the costs, which cover most of the proposals.

As the Prime Minister pointed out at our meeting, increased expenditure of this magnitude would impose a quite intolerable burden on the working population. If I may give just one specific example of what could be involved, implementation of the first, and most expensive, demand for basic retirement pension of one half or one third average gross earning respectively for a couple and a single person, would - if met through national insurance contributions - involve a huge increase of 11 percentage points on the joint Class 1 national insurance contribution, over and above the increases which are taking place in April to keep the National Insurance Fund out of deficit. If the proportionate split between employer and employee were maintained at the 1982 levels such an increase would mean the man on average earnings of £150 a week having to pay about £7.60 extra a week and his employer about £8.90 extra. For a woman on average earnings of £98 a week the increase in contributions would be £4.97 a week, with the employer paying £5.80. But if the whole of the increase was met by employees, in order to protect the competitiveness of industry the man on average earnings would pay an extra £16.50 a week, an increase of 126 per cent. I am sure you

/will *R*

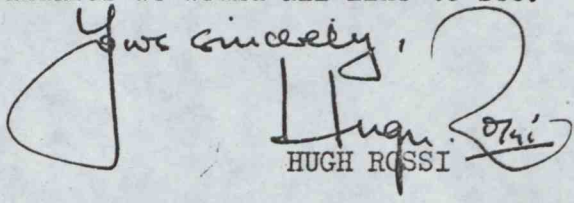
E.R.

will recognise that no such burden could be placed on the working population in present circumstances. As the Prime Minister explained national insurance benefits are provided on a "pay as you go" basis and there is no huge surplus in the National Insurance Fund on which to draw: indeed over the year 1981/82 the fund is running at a deficit of about £15.3 million.

Frankly, we believe that it would be counter-productive to pensioners' interests even to attempt what you request: wage demands would inevitably rise sharply in the face of reduced take home pay; inflation would spiral, industry's international competitiveness would be severely damaged; and consequently any short term gains to pensioners could not be maintained and would swiftly be eroded.

In the Government's view, the policies we are pursuing offer a far more realistic approach and indeed hold out the best prospects for pensioners in the longer term. We are concentrating our efforts on conquering inflation partly to protect savings and partly to reinforce further our commitment to protect the real value of retirement pension and other long term benefits. We have also given special help with heating costs by way of our record boost to supplementary benefit heating additions to those pensioners most in need. Spending on health and social services has increased in real terms under this Government. Of course we would like to do more. We have said consistently that pensioners will share in rising living standards when the economy improves, but our priority for the present must be to ensure the nation is able to earn the income needed to provide the higher standards we would all like to see.

Yours sincerely,


HUGH ROSSI

COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE DECLARATION OF INTENT

PROPOSAL	COMMENT	ANNUAL COST
1. PENSION OF $\frac{1}{2}$ AND $\frac{1}{3}$ GROSS AVERAGE EARNINGS FOR COUPLE AND SINGLE PERSON RESPECTIVELY	Cost also includes other linked long-term benefits	£11,500 million*
2. SIX MONTHLY UP-RATING	Each 1 per cent increase in pension and other long-term benefits <u>brought forward</u> to May would cost £80 million in 1982/3; say 5 per cent	£400 million*
3. ADEQUATE HEATING ALLOWANCE COVERING ALL FUEL	Examples a. abolition of gas and electricity standing charges for pensioners; b. extending <u>supp ben</u> lower rate of heating addition to all pensioners households (minimum estimate)	£250 million* OR £380 million*
4. INDEX LINKED CHRISTMAS BONUS OF £20	Each additional £1 on the bonus costs £10 million	£100 million*
5. REDUCING PENSION AGE TO 60 AND ABOLITION OF EARNINGS RULE	Cost of lowering male pension age rises in longer terms with new pension scheme and lower levels of unemployment. Estimate on earnings rule in respect of present pension age	£2,500 million** £45 million ** (at 1980 prices)
6. ADEQUATE DEATH GRANT FOR EVERYONE	Estimate for restoring death grant to original value, in respect of all deaths (£190)	£110 million*

PROPOSAL	COMMENT	ANNUAL COST
7. FREE HEALTH CARE ON DEMAND	Unquantifiable	?
8. AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES	Unquantifiable	?
9. APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION INCLUDING CHOICE	Unquantifiable	?
10. NATIONAL SCHEME OF TRAVEL CONCESSIONS	Estimate is the minimum	£100 million
11. ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES	Unquantifiable	?
		TOTAL £15,000 MILLION (Absolute minimum)

* These figures all relate to additional benefit costs which would increase public expenditure by the amounts shown

** These figures relate to the net cost to the Exchequer after allowing for the higher benefit costs and taking account of the effects on income tax and national insurance contributions

-9 MAR 1962



National PENSIONERS' Convention

5/3
10/3
Mr Rozzi's letter is with the pm.
wm
9/3



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 February 1982

Willie ✓ OK ww 5/3
D/Ind. have asked for extension to Wednesday next, 10 March. O.K.?
Key 5/3

The Prime Minister was very grateful for the briefing that you provided for her meeting with the National Pensioners' Convention Steering Committee, which took place at 1545 yesterday in her room at the House of Commons. She said that the brief was excellent, and was particularly pleased with the supplementary briefing provided on the increases in the national insurance contributions that would be necessary to finance the proposals in the pensioners' "Declaration of Intent". I hope you will pass on the Prime Minister's thanks to all the officials concerned, and to your Minister.

I attach a record of the meeting. You will see that the Prime Minister agreed to write to Mr. Willis, Chairman of the Steering Committee, setting out the Government's estimate of the cost of implementing the proposals in the "Declaration of Intent". I should be grateful if you could provide a suitable draft by Monday 1 March.

Hugh Rozzi with send this. on pm's behalf.

Richard Riley will see that the Prime Minister also agreed to ask his Secretary of State for a report on whether there was anything that could be done to meet the delegation's criticisms of standing charges for telephone services. I should be grateful if he could let me have this report by Friday 5 March.

D/IND. ||

I am copying this to Richard Riley (Department of Industry), David Lumley (Department of Energy), Jill Rutter (HM Treasury), and to Brendan O'Gorman in your Secretary of State's office.

W. F. S. RICKETT

SW

Ms Melonie Smith
Department of Health and Social Security.

British Pensioner

British Pensioners
and
Trade Unions
Action
Association
(BPTUAA)

Number 9

Spring 1982

8p

One million say scrap fuel standing charges for pensioners

Our petition gets overwhelming public backing

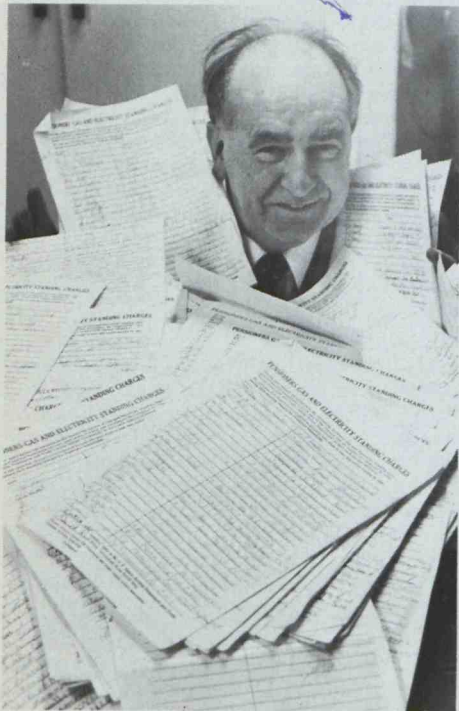
PETITIONS signed by around a million British electors were handed into No. 10 Downing Street on Thursday, January 28 by officers of the BPTUAA. Calling on the Government to take urgent steps to ease the unfair burden on pensioner households of high and rising fuel standing charges, our petition proposed outright abolition. Standing charges for gas have rocketed by four times in 2½ years and electricity by two-and-a-half times. A pensioner relying on gas and electricity for heating, cooking and light now pays almost £1.30 a week before a switch or a tap is turned on.

The overwhelming public concern was expressed in the main on November 12, the Pensioners' Day of Action, when members of our branches and sympathisers picketed gas and electricity showrooms up and down the country and invited signatures on our petition. "They were queuing up to put their names down," many branches reported.

Although organised by the BPTUAA, the petition campaign was helped on by other pensioners' bodies, by trade unions and trades councils, and in pubs, pop-in

parlours and factory canteens. Thank you all.

But will the voices of a million stir this Government into measures to alleviate this terrible burden on the old? Passing the buck to the fuel boards isn't good enough; they just blame the Government for forcing them to put up prices. Will their hearts soften in the face of harrowing tales of the aged faced with the choice of warmth or adequate food during these months of snow and bitter weather. If Mrs. Thatcher dismisses out of hand the deep concern of a million voters, then her Government just does not deserve to govern.



One million signatures mean 40,000 petition forms; here Fred Baker comes up for air among some of them.

Photo by courtesy of Chatham News

Dear Sir Geoffrey . . .

Our advice to the
Chancellor of the Exchequer

TEN MILLION pensioners await the budget on March 9, some with hope, most with trepidation. Please surprise us all by giving back what you have pinched from us in the last year or so. You gave us a 9 per cent rise in pensions in November to cope with a 12 per cent rise in the prices of goods and services – and that figure seriously under-estimates how much prices have really gone up, especially those for fuel. Your own Tax and Price Index shows a 15.6 per cent increase when tax is taken into account. You are better at figures, so they say, so what about a 15 per cent pension rise? And perhaps a bit on account in a May, half-year review. If that works out eventually a bit over the odds, it makes a pensioner's life easier to be owing you instead of you owing us.

Even that rise will be inadequate if you don't do something about income tax



Continue the fight

urges Alan Sapper

AS CHAIRMAN of the General Council of the TUC and as General Secretary of a union which is still engaged in fighting for basic pension rights for many members, I am fully aware of the importance of pensioners' issues and of the continuing role of the trade union movement in tackling these. Pensions themselves are nothing more than deferred wages, and as the TUC Campaign for Reduced Working Time has emphasised, the aim of a shorter working life makes it all the more necessary to bring pensioners' rights into the central arena of trade union negotiations.

In making pensioners' rights a central issue and not a 'fringe interest' for trade unionists I think we have, first of all, to recognise the sheer numbers of people who fall into the category of pensioners. In England and Wales alone there are 7.1m people over the age of 65, constituting 14% of the population. When all those, especially women, who retire before 65 are added to this figure, we have a significant and growing section of the population in this position. I would like to go on to look at three questions in particular – the level of pensions, the retirement age and pensioners' social rights.

On the level of state pensions, the policy of the TUC is quite clear – we call upon the Government to make an immediate commitment to a pension at least equal to one half average gross earnings for a married couple, and one third of such earnings for a single person, with six-monthly upratings. The extent to which actual state pensions lag behind these targets is illustrated by the fact that on the latest figures available (1980), the married pension was only 31.8% of average

continued overleaf

personal allowances. Last year you failed to raise these in line with inflation, so those pensioners over the poverty line were clobbered by 30 per cent cut off pension increases. We want personal allowances raised by 12 per cent for the last year and another 12 per cent for the year before; that means allowances up by one-quarter, in round figures. The single person's age allowance should go up by £455 to £2,275 and for the married pensioner up by £724 to £3,619. And the single age allowance should be applied to all single retired persons over 60.

We could go on. But if you just do this for those who have earned their retirement, we will even call you "a generous Chancellor" who put a bit of spending power in the old 'uns' pockets, helping our friends still working.

British Pensioner

Alan Sapper continues

adult male earnings, while the single person's pension only reached 19.9% of this figure.

How will such increases in pensions be paid for? Firstly, as continental experience shows, UK employers could be paying a substantially higher contribution towards social security costs. Secondly, there is scope for more National Insurance costs to be met from direct taxation – a method which would also be fairer and less regressive.

Finally, there is also the major area of occupational pensions where, as well as improved benefits, we need to seek rights of participation, information and equality.

Our policy on retirement age is for the right for all workers to retire from 60 onwards on an adequate pension. Nobody should be forced to carry on working on low incomes beyond this age – and at the same time only adequate pensions can ensure that retirement is felt as a benefit and not as a cost. The aim of retirement at 60 will, of course, bring about equality between men and women. We should resist any other proposals for equalisation which are based on 'levelling-up' (i.e. increasing women's retirement age beyond 60) rather than levelling-down.

In addition to an adequate income and recommended retirement age there are a whole range of **services to pensioners** which we should regard as rights rather than privileges.

We need, therefore, to ensure that pensioners enjoy suitable accommodation; a full range of personal social services provided at home; cheap transport; full health care; adequate heating allowances; a realistic Christmas bonus and death grant; and a variety of leisure facilities.

The present Government, far from extending such facilities, is obsessively restricting useful public spending, which as well as providing services and jobs would begin the desperately needed reflation of the economy. We must continue our fight to reverse these measures.

In conclusion, I repeat my belief that pensioners' issues are not peripheral but central to trade union bargaining. The development

Pensioner Personalities

No. 4: Tom Tissiman

"CAN I go to school without boots like my friends?" The answer was Tom Tissiman's first lesson about the "haves" and the "have-nots", a lesson he has never forgotten in a lifetime of fighting for the underprivileged. A couple of years at sea after school allowed him to see much of the world but, at 16 and a few weeks before the 1926 General Strike, Tom became an apprentice carpenter and joiner. He would have lost his apprentice deeds for refusing to work on jobs started had it not been for union backing. So Tom, who had become messenger boy for the strike committee, joined the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (now UCATT) and has been an active member ever since. On many branch committees and delegate to the local Labour Party and Trades Council, he became secretary of the latter, a post he held for 35 years until January of this year. But he is still chairman of the Kent Association of Trades Councils whose secretary he was from 1936 to 1947.

Eighteen years' experience on local councils and Tom remains a Gravesham Borough Councillor – for Labour, of course. He proudly

ADEQUATE PENSIONS without need for supplementary and other benefits and reviewed six-monthly, exemption from standing charges for fuel and telephones for pensioners and improvements in income tax allowances were among demands made in resolutions carried unanimously at the BPTUAA Annual General Meeting on January 30. 250 delegates and visitors at this important policy-making conference at Congress House, London heard TUC Chairman Alan Sapper pledge trade union support for pensioners' demands (see front-page article). He compared costs of social benefits with the excessive expense on defence and the wastage of our North Sea oil assets. "We must defeat this Government which attacks directly those in need, including pensioners, by cuts in public services and the value of pensions," he said. "The BPTUAA is an essential part of the fight back. Your interests are central to the TUC's concern."

Increase our influence

Opening the conference, President Tom Alvey drew particular attention to the deaths and suffering through hypothermia as a result of this severe winter, "a situation that should never be tolerated in any civilised society". National Pensioners' Conventions and representation to the Government had done little to improve the basic position of pensioners, he said. "Unfortunately we can exert no industrial pressure, but this must not stop us increasing what influence we have. Remember we have over nine million votes".

Petition success

A year of growth and progress, describes the General Secretary's report adopted by the AGM. Meeting Ministers and Opposition

of the pensioners' movement, working in alliance with trade unions and the TUC, is the best way to build on the advances we have already made and to realise the aims which we have set for ourselves.

wears his CND badge and is a great friend to the ethnic minorities, being on the Community Relations Council. In fact, wherever Tom sees injustice – be it against school children, council tenants, pensioners and the unemployed, for example – he is in there battling.

When the BPTUAA called on him for help, Tom recognised the challenge and the need for pensioners to organise. He got a BPTUAA branch going and now, three years later, Gravesham branch has a sound membership with 50 average attendance at meetings and selling 400 copies of *British Pensioner* each quarter. As branch secretary Tom was responsible for the formation of a borough federation of bodies concerned with the blind, the disabled, widows and pensioners. And Tom is our Association Vice-President and that makes him very active for pensioners nationally. At 72, Tom Tissiman has lost nothing of his verve and enthusiasm for causes fighting for the "have-nots".



Tom proudly wearing his CND badge.

Photo by Carlos Augusto (IFL)

Pensioner democracy in action

Jim Nash reports on 1982 AGM

spokesmen, talking to Metropolitan Authorities leaders and to the BBC on TV licences, all these activities and more were reported. But the highlight of the year's activities had been the greatly successful petition against high fuel standing charges, said Fred Baker. Presentation of the petitions, containing nearly one million signatures, to 10 Downing Street was only the start. "We have asked to meet the Secretary of State for Social Services and the Opposition will be raising the subject in the House. Pensioners must have fuel help now; the 2 per cent shortfall in basic pensions entitles them to that," he claimed.

We need more money

The Association has spent £317 more than received, reported Treasurer Norman Edwards. "With only £3,129 in hand, we need finance", he said. "A growing organisation like ours requires a working capital of around £10,000", he warned. Conference adopted the report.

More British Pensioners

Sales of *British Pensioner* had crept up to 12,000, double that of No. 1, reported editor Jim Nash. We had almost broken even on the first eight issues; but this would not have been possible without the support of branches and unions, a printer who had kept his price to us at 1979 levels and £1,920 of advertising mainly from trade union sources, he said.

Concern about fares and rents

In the general debate delegates raised many subjects directly affecting pensioners. Due to the decisions of the Law Lords, concessionary fares were at stake and, far from improving, the whole principle was now in the melting pot. Rises in council house rents by Whitehall edict hit pensioners hard. Could the TUC help here, asked one delegate. Why did pensioners' conferences have to be held in the cold months, asked another. And why not more regional conventions?

Working together

Three resolutions on co-ordination among pensioners' bodies were remitted to the new Executive Council for attention. Some delegates wanted one united organisation; others did not see the BPTUAA as an umbrella organisation, rather as a background one, forcing the pace. Whatever their views, there was no dissent on the idea of all bodies working together. On cuts in home-help services, the "life line" for so many, the AGM called for co-operation with the health service unions in battling against "these vicious and inhuman cuts".

Tax and TV licences

Free TV licences for all pensioners demanded Salford and Sheffield; to which AGM said "Yes". Restore the income tax age allowances to a level allowing for price rises in the last two years, claimed Erith; and the newly-affiliated National Association of Widows wanted the age allowance for all retired women of 60 and over. AGM agreed to both. Other motions were referred to the EC, but conference unanimously endorsed new rules and constitution.

Job for the new EC

The present General Secretary, President, Vice-President and Treasurer were re-elected with a 30-strong Executive Council. There are now two Assistant General Secretaries, Tom Mitchell of Luton and Bill Claxton of Hatfield. A good team given a tough job by the AGM! They need your full support.

High standing charges are a nonsense

says Ethel Chipchase

"THERE ARE certain fixed costs inherent in having a gas supply; the pipe leading to the premises; the meter itself; the costs of reading the meter and the billing process; and the emergency and other services not individually charged for. Those costs are incurred no matter how much or how little gas is used. If someone with gas used no gas at all he would pay nothing – and the costs of his supply would be borne by other users. Where part of the total cost is recovered by a standing charge, then there is a commensurate reduction in the running rate." That's how British Gas explains away the standing charge.

What this doesn't tell you is why that charge has gone up so much, so suddenly. Pensioners were not unduly concerned when the standing charge for gas in the London area was £1.25 a quarter in 1977 or even when it rose to £2 a quarter throughout 1978 and 1979. But then, suddenly, halfway through 1980 it rose to £4.40, and in 1981, three increases totalling £3.60 took it to the present £8.00. That means £32 a year or 61p each week. **And that is unacceptable.**

I suppose that the Electricity Council would offer the same kind of nonsensical apologia. For that's what it amounts to – **NONSENSE.**

I no longer use gas because I could see no point in paying out two standing charges. And the current quarterly £8 will buy me more than 150 electricity units (or 440 units at the night economy rate). But not everyone can make, or want to make, the changeover to an all-electric household. Anyway, I did it years before I retired. But I still know all about the problems of pensioners having to meet both gas and electricity bills through my neighbours who sometimes come to me for help.

Take the case of Mary. The only gas appliance she has is a cooking stove. An obvious gas leak developed so she sought help. The gas men made three visits and found no less than five leaks. "Better get a new stove, love", they told Mary, and, reluctantly, she did. What happened then? A bill for £10 for dealing with the leaks and another for £18.50 for installing the new stove. We were told that Mary had to pay for the leak visits because there had been more than one. But couldn't they have found all five leaks in one visit?

We phoned and wrote to North Thames Gas and the Gas Consumers' Council. Finally, Mary had to pay the £18.50 but the other bill was withdrawn. This was all the more pleasurable to me because the Consumers' Council had carefully explained why it was impossible to reduce either charge.

There is a **free** inspection service of gas and electrical appliances but the elderly are often afraid to use it. For example, their fire may be old and they know that the first thing the inspector may do is to advise replacement by a modern, safer fire they cannot afford.

Back to Mary who lent me her gas bills back to 1977. Simply by dividing the total bills for each year, including standing charges, by the number of therms used, I worked out the cost



Ethel Chipchase was TUC Women's Officer before she retired in 1979 and joined the BPTUAA's Executive Council to fight for retired trade unionists.

Photo Andrew Ward (Report)

per therm to her. In 1977 Mary actually paid 47.3p per therm and not 21.6p or 22.8p; in 1979 it was 56.2p and in 1980 79.8p not 24.6p for each therm Mary used. Up to October in 1981 she paid £1.65 per therm (cost of 13½ therms had been £3.33 plus £19 standing charges). After the rise to £8 from October 1, it will get worse, much worse.

Is the answer a prepayment meter? British Gas has said that on such a meter in the London area the 1981 charges would have meant an increase of just over 15 per cent and in October of only 12p a week. If Mary had a prepayment meter she would pay less although the charge per therm is higher and there is now a standing charge. For example, for the quarter up to October she would have paid a standing charge of £3 plus £1.30 for 3.1 therms at 43p a therm, i.e. £4.30 as opposed to £7.77. But she would have first have to pay £12 for meter exchange. Who knows, too, how long the very small user will have any financial advantage? And there is the security risk; coin meters encourage break-ins.

It doesn't matter where you live. Although standing charges vary quite a bit between areas, the dearest for gas are those where the electricity standing charges are highest. Wherever you are the less gas or electricity you use the greater is the relative burden of standing charges.

So what is to be done? One idea is that pensioners should pay only the cost of fuel used, refusing to pay the standing charges. I do not agree. While the charges remain they are legal charges and non-payment could result in legal action against the pensioner (**not** against these advising non-payment) and could lead to service being cut altogether.

If there have to be standing charges – and no one will be convinced by the specious arguments of British Gas – then they should be radically reduced for pensioner-only households. Indeed, with profit margins as they are in the gas industry, the standing charge could well be abolished for all those living on pensions.

Could this be done without a means test? And what about the household where the pensioner is not the only occupant? There could be abuse, some people argue. We do know that there are about 2½ million households where just one pensioner lives alone; and there are very many more with two pensioners living and no one else. It is surely not a means test to sign a simple form declaring "I am a pensioner and only pensioners live in this household". Better still, abolish standing charges altogether, for everyone. My sources of information tell me that in 1979 the annual domestic consumption of gas was 8,225 million therms. A penny on the price of each therm would bring in a great deal of money, over £82 millions. **But my friend Mary would be paying 25.3p per therm now instead of £1.65!**

TV licences up – but no help for pensioners

DESPITE pressure from pensioners' organisations, the Government put up the cost of TV licences as from December 1, 1981. Black and white licences went up 25%, from £12 to £15 and colour licences went up 35%, from £34 to £46. At the same time the Government said **NO** to the idea that the licence should be taken into account when assessing Supplementary Pension needs and said "We'll look at it" to proposals that hotels with more than ten bedrooms with TVs should pay separate licences for each room.

To the housebound pensioner, television is an essential lifeline and the senior citizen most likely to be hit by the £12 rise for colour will be the one reliant on a supplementary pension. This and other points were made by Fred Baker, Ethel Chipchase and George Scott when they represented the BPTUAA on a visit of pensioners' organisations to the BBC Television Centre back in November. The BBC television controller, Alan Hart, told us that they supported both the supplementary pension idea and the proposal to make hotels pay fair TV fees. But, he said, a concessionary licence for all six million pensioner households would result in others having to pay half as much again, an unfair burden. The BBC hoped that the needy could be helped through special organisations and the Social Services.



Our General Secretary makes a point to Alan Hart.

The Post Office now has a 50p TV licence stamp in addition to that for 25p. This way of "easy payment" of licences plus the BBC's own Gift Token scheme does help a bit. But all that the powers-that-be can advise low-income pensioners is change to black and white if you can't afford colour or do without TV altogether if you can't afford even that.

Meanwhile one man has gone to prison in support of our Telford branch campaign for concessionary TV licences. 67-year-old Len Walker refused to renew his licence and was fined £24. He could not pay so was sent to prison for fourteen days. Len's stand has fueled the campaign and our branch has initiated a petition for concessions.

November 12 was our day!

THROUGHOUT Britain on November 12, pensioners were on the streets telling the public how rising prices, the trimming of the pension increase and the cutting of social services were affecting the nation's ten million retired. For November 12 was Pensioners' Action Day. But, although all pensioners' organisations were involved through the National Pensioners' Convention Steering Committee, the most active were the BPTUAA and its affiliates and the Scottish OAP Association. Under the banner headline, "Day of Action - terrific response", our sister paper, *Scottish Pensioner*, has reported fully on what happened north of the border. Here we sketch in what some BPTUAA branches achieved in the rest of Britain, based on reports received.

Starting in the north east, the focal point for our Wearside branch's campaign was a meeting with the mayor, Tom Finnigan. "I will lend my support for any benefits on behalf of pensioners", he said. "They have provided, in essence, the wealth of the country from which benefits come". The mayor then signed our petition. The branch pressed the need for information, explanation and help to pensioners in claiming supplementary pensions and other entitlements.

In **Manchester**, delegations of pensioners met the Lord Mayor who promised support for the 1982 National Pensioners' Convention. Over a thousand petition signatures were collected during demonstrations outside gas and electricity showrooms and our voice was heard on BBC Manchester. In neighbouring **Salford**, our branch organised similar demonstrations and met the mayor, Mr Ivor Lott, who was so sympathetic to our cause that he signed a membership form!

In **Liverpool**, 3,000 leaflets were handed out and many signatures to our petition were given during picketing outside showrooms, organised by Sefton Pensioners' Association and the TGWU Retired Members' Association. Interviews were sought with local authority councillors and those who responded, all Labour, told us that they fully supported the Declaration of Intent. Television, radio

and newspaper coverage of these events was extensive.

Over in South Yorkshire, **Sheffield** Pensioners' Action Group (SPAG) reports a highly successful day - week, in fact; they borrowed a display caravan for that period in the very centre of the shopping precinct. The 500 members of SPAG gave magnificent support with the result that they have now grown to 900! Six of them met a representative of the area gas board who promised to take back our views on the standing charge increases to his chairman. Local radio covered the week's campaign and Yorkshire TV ran a feature. November 12 was SPAG's first birthday and they deserve our unstinted congratulations for their one year's progress.

Down to **Birmingham** where over 400 senior citizens were addressed outside the Council House by the Labour Lord Mayor who gave his support to our campaign. Gas and electricity showrooms were lobbied, our members called on councillors and 10,000 copies of the Declaration of Intent were handed out to the public.

In nearby **Coventry**, a deputation of 50 met the Lord Mayor who had already shown his support at the Rally a week earlier (see report on page 5). Norman Edwards, Coventry TGWU RMA secretary and BPTUAA's treasurer, con-



Showing the flag and collecting signatures in Hatfield town centre.
Photo by courtesy of Welwyn and Hatfield Times

gratulated the Lord Mayor on the council's decision to send out cards encouraging supplementary benefit claims by those in need. The deputation moved on to gas and electricity showrooms where over 2,000 petition signatures were obtained.

Bristol branch had planned delegations to meet the Lord Mayor, the Labour leader and the chairman of the Social Services committee. Further south, our **Cowes, IoW** members gathered in Newport to hand out leaflets and explain our demands.

Over in Sussex our **Brighton** members were busy demonstrating and collecting signatures for our standing charges petition. Branch chairman Ted Scrase comments, "The Day of Action follows Armistice Day on which the nation pays tribute to the efforts of the people to keep it free and living in peace. The heroes who fought so valiantly are now the pensioners who are asking for the right to live and die in dignity".

In the home counties it was a very busy day. In **Luton's** shopping centre over a thousand petition signatures were collected and our members picketed the fuel showrooms. Our branch and the TGWU RMA met the mayor and Luton borough council officials who undertook to publicise the take-up of supplementary benefits. Following a meeting with the county council and bus authorities, our branch's suggestion that bus lanes be routed through Luton's main thoroughfare, George Street, has been adopted; this will allow direct access to this pedestrianised area.

Harlow shoppers gave enthusiastic support to our branch's call for petition signatures - over 2,000 put down their names; and 35 joined our branch. Showrooms were picketed and Harlow council chairman, Alex James, was lobbied over heating charges. Harlow Council has recently opened a new centre for pensioners, the Leah Manning centre.

Our **Welwyn and Hatfield** branch chalked up a successful day. Armed with posters and banners they paraded outside the gas and elec-

tricity showrooms, collecting signatures at the rate of five hundred an hour. Over 1,000 leaflets were given out and 80 *British Pensioners* sold to the queue of pensioners outside the Hatfield post office. Many new members were made to swell the branch's total to 565. As a result of an approach to local councillors, the Welwyn and Hatfield District Council has pledged its support for the Declaration of Intent.

Over in Essex our **Harold Hill** branch succeeded in arranging a meeting with the mayor, but, says our branch chairman, "Being a Tory, he gave us a Thatcher speech". "Nough said."

Then over the Thames and **Erith** branch chalked up over 2,000 petition signatures obtained in a four-hour picket outside the gas showroom in Bexleyheath main shopping centre. "We also sold a hundred *British Pensioners* and the queue of sympathisers meant that, at times, helpers were working with three petition boards each", reports our correspondent. The borough's Labour Group has promised to weave our demands into the party's May election manifesto, but there is scant sympathy from the reigning Tories. Bexley Trades Council backed up the branch on Action Day.

A few miles away in **Bromley**, Kent a 2½-hour stint outside the gas and electricity showrooms in the High Street brought over a thousand petition signatures. "People were queueing up to sign", said branch chairman George Scott. The mayor of Bromley could not meet a deputation - he didn't have enough time. It was his council which took the Greater London Council through the courts to stop London's cheap fares policy!

All over **London**, pensioners were protesting about the standing charges and other injustices to the old. In borough after borough the story was the same - shoppers eager to sign our petition outside the showrooms followed by meetings with councillors. **Wood Green** pensioners were assured by Haringey council

continued opposite



Wearside pensioners discuss our problems with Sunderland's mayor, Tom Finnigan.

Photo by courtesy of Sunderland Echo

leader that he and his Labour colleagues would give priority to the elderly in resisting expenditure cuts. Our branch pays tribute to the support given by the local **Pensioners' Voice** branch.

Westminster branch and Task Force helpers gave out leaflets and collected signatures outside the gas showrooms in Church Street NW8, filmed by a Swedish TV team. Younger people were particularly sympathetic, said our branch secretary. Later in Victoria Street SW1, the emphasis was on explaining to passers-by, many of whom were visitors, what the demonstration was about. Finally the police moved us on because "we were within two miles of Parliament when it was sitting". But they were quite friendly about it!

Of course there were many others in London and throughout the country – in **Warrington** in the north to **Hastings** in the south – all doing a magnificent public relations and information job on that cold day in November. But above all it was our day, a day which really put the BPTUAA on the map.

House full for Coventry Rally

OVER 500 senior citizens packed the Belgrade Theatre on November 4 to hear of plans to form a BPTUAA branch in the city. As a result arrangements are in hand for an inaugural meeting at the Coventry AUEW hall in January. Fred Baker told the theatre audience that the new branch would cater for all local union



Mary Thomas, Harlow branch secretary, says it all. How true has been her November 12 prediction!

Photo by courtesy of Harlow Star

members and their wives, complementing the valuable work already being done by the TGWU Retired Members branch there. The need for pensioners to work together was growing as attacks on standards grow, he said. "The Government has underpaid us by 2 per cent this year. Will they give it back next November?", he asked. "Not if pensioners fail to shout loud enough. And that shows the need for organisation". Our General Secretary paid a tribute to BPTUAA treasurer Norman Edwards, his colleagues and the Coventry Trades Council for their efforts in arranging the rally.

Jack Jones, retired TGWU General Secretary, on the same theme, said that, without the concerted action of pensioners themselves, things could go from bad to worse. "Nearly two-thirds of the retired are virtually prisoners in their own homes. Many are living like animals, say some doctors". Jack detailed many areas in which improvements are necessary, like travel concessions for all the

country. The retired pensioners' movement is a fellowship of those wanting to get things done, replacing the fellowship we knew in the workplace, he said.

Ethel Chipchase retired TUC Women's Officer, criticised pre-retirement courses because they were preaching to the converted, to those who were able to organise their own activities after giving up work; such advice was not often available to those most in need of it. On pensions, she said they were attacked on two fronts, by inflation and by unsympathetic Governments. "We're always catching up and never get a bit in hand. And from the moment an increase is given it begins to be whittled away". Ethel pointed out the inequality arising because more women depend on the basic pension than men; more males enjoyed occupational pensions, linked to pay, itself normally higher than for women.

The Rally was chaired by Tom Alvey, BPTUAA President, and other speakers were the Lord Mayor of Coventry, George Parks MP (who "preferred to be there than at the State Opening of Parliament") and John White, organising secretary of Age Concern Coventry.

Building an information bank

PROVISION of advice and information is regarded by our branches as an essential service to members and friends. To do this effectively an "information bank" for reference and fact-checking is a "must". It is easy to start such a bank. First collect all free leaflets and booklets issued by your local DHSS office, your local council information office, gas, electricity and water boards, community health councils, British Telecom (telephone service), trade union publications, particularly TUC booklets through your trades council, Age Concern offices – and there are others. Then buy or scrounge specialist publications on subjects of concern to the pensioner; your local reference library will advise you. But above all watch the columns of *British Pensioner* for mention of new and revised publications and, of course, keep a file of our paper for reference. Here are a few recent booklets you will need . . .

Your Rights (Age Concern) is a first-class guide to all benefits available to pensioners and how to claim them. The 1982, 100-page, revised edition has it all; and it costs 55p through Age Concern offices and booksellers. The TGWU Retired Members' Association has a special edition produced in association with Age Concern. Other unions might well follow the TGWU's lead here.

Your Taxes and Savings in Retirement (also Age Concern) is for those falling into income tax inspectors' clutches and even with a bit over to save and draw interest on. The author, Janice Allen, has set down clearly and simply in the 88 pages of this guide all you are likely to want to know about taxes and savings. It costs £1, plus 15p postage and packing if

bought direct from Age Concern, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL.

Guide to Supplementary Benefits (TUC) was reviewed in *British Pensioner* No. 7 (page 6). This guide explains the regulations and how to obtain proper benefit entitlement and costs 75p from the TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. There are special bulk prices.

Supplementary Benefit and the Elderly – A Training Aid (Age Concern) is a self-teaching, 60-page, booklet for those advising pensioners. "By the end of the aid, a learner should be equipped to answer fairly complicated queries", claims Age Concern. But it comes dearer, at £2.50, which includes postage and packing, from the address above.

Heating Fact Sheet is a special 8-page duplicated guide available free from Age Concern on receipt of a large stamped addressed envelope. It covers heating costs and supplementary benefits, payment of gas and electricity bills, disconnections, insulation, services provided and Social Service assistance. It's an excellent, clearly-worded guide, well worth the cost of a stamp.

Your Holidays in Retirement (Age Concern). Snow and low temperatures make us think of holidays and warm sunshine. This 72-page Age Concern guide by Jane Minter and Sue Nicholson tells you what happens to your pension when you are away, who gives what accommodation and travel concessions and what facilities there are for those with special needs. Your rights as a consumer, health matters and insurance are other subjects covered for 70p through booksellers or 90p including post from Age Concern at Mitcham, address above.

Many Action Day pictures have been held over for lack of space as have many branch reports. I'll try to put that right in our May issue. Editor.

Perhaps your branch should appoint an Information Officer with authority to build an information bank for branch use. He or she will find useful tips in this feature. But if you want further advice or can offer suggestions to help other branches please write to the Editor, Jim Nash.

Grand National draw launched

The BPTUAA is running a draw on the Grand National to be run at Liverpool on Saturday, April 3. Tickets are 5p each with £100 as the first prize, £50 second, £25 third and £10 fourth. All proceeds will go to help our Association's work. Books of five will cost 20p, the 5p going in most cases to help branch activities. Money, counterfoils and unsold tickets should be returned by March 12 to our lottery promoter, Mr W. J. Claxton of 25 Warren Close, Hatfield, Herts. If you would like to help us raise funds by selling tickets, please get in touch with Mr. Claxton.

We made £515 profit on our November Handicap Draw and our sincere thanks to all those who helped to sell tickets. Winners were Pat Leahy (*Lafontaine*, first), TGWU Welwyn Garden City (*On Show*, second), G. Covington (*Path of Peace*, third) and J. Jackson (*Karador*, fourth).

Think twice about water meters

SOME WATER authorities are giving the option to customers to pay by amount used rather than by the standing charge method. The BPTUAA has said that it is unfair that, for example, a single pensioner must pay the same as a very large family next door in a similar house but using very much more water. But, he warned, a water meter may not be the answer.

Thames Water authority is telling customers that they can change to metering from April 1982; no compulsion, you make the choice. But what will it cost if you change? First there is the cost of installing the meter. Anything from £30 to £80, says Thames Water; and they don't do it – you must find your own plumber. Then there will still be a standing charge, a "customer metering charge", at present unspecified. And remember that roughly half your bill is for sewerage charges which will presumably remain, unless, of course, you are among the very few not connected to the sewer! Another big "if" is what will be the unit rate? Thames Water doesn't say.

Take one example, a suburban three-bedroomed, semi-detached house, rateable value £257 (*my own, Editor*), annual water and sewerage rate now £54. With

two in the house and average use of water, Thames Water estimates the metered cost would total £36. "Average use" is about 60 gallons a day, says the Authority. But if there is a washing machine or dishwasher or if our two bath every day, your total could be quite a bit higher. So the typical two **might** save a third of the water bill, £18, after installation is paid for. There is naturally no guarantee about future unit costs (how much per gallon) or the level of standing charges. So that's your dilemma. If you want to know more and live in the Thames Water area, send for their Domestic Metering Information Pack. For other areas check with your own Water Authority.

Earlier this year the National Consumer Council gave the "thumbs down" to water meters; old age pensioners and other needy people could find their water bills going up, they said. More thought and more facts and figures both from this country and abroad before the change is made, demands the NCC. The National Water Council has said that water bills will go up anyway and, says the NCC in evidence to the NWC, it is mainly the better-off who will benefit at the expense of the poorest if households are encouraged to instal water meters. The National Water Council had estimated that meter rentals would be about £8 a year; and meters would need replacing roughly every eight years.

Our advice to you is to think very carefully before committing yourself to a water meter. Whatever you eventually decide, do get all the facts first. One thing is certain – the water authorities will get what they want from customers overall and they are not really concerned about injustice to those on limited incomes.



Oyez, Oyez. Frank Shufflebotham, town crier and Freeman of England from Newcastle-under-Lyme, who led BPTUAA pensioners with nearly a million signatures to Downing Street on January 28.

WEST



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MAINLY PERSONAL

by Kay Nash

Sleek feet

FEET are peculiar things. There they hang on the end of your legs, sometimes looking very much the worse for wear. But make no mistake, they are two of the most important parts of your body. We all know that aching, tired feeling when all is not well. But how many people *really* take care of their feet properly? They flog them to death and then wonder why corns, bunions and other equally painful things appear. The older one gets the more important it is to make sure that those two large (or small) feet are having an easy time and are not making you house-bound when you could be trotting around.

There is nothing worse than painful, swollen feet. It not only makes you feel under the weather, what's worse, it makes you *look* under the weather. How many times have you seen a person hobbling along and thought to yourself "I bet her feet are killing her"? And according to a recent survey, nine-tenths of the population have something wrong with their feet.

But it's never too late to make amends. First, **don't** try and treat your problem yourself; you'll do more harm than good. If you can afford it, pay a visit to a chiropodist and if you can't afford to pay, contact the Social Services department of your local Council and ask whether it's possible to be treated on the National Health Service. Most Councils have a chiropody service, but the waiting list is long and could mean you'll have to join a three-month queue. Too few chiropodists and too many customers, that's the trouble.

In the meantime, pamper your feet. Wash them daily making sure to dry thoroughly between the toes or cracks will form. Use a softening cream if the skin is dry and massage it in gently but thoroughly. Boots E45, a plain, lanolin-based cream, is very good; or if you're short of money, a little vegetable cooking oil will help. But make sure you wipe the surplus off, otherwise you'll get very messy stockings or socks.

Toenails should be cut straight across or pressure makes the flesh squeeze up round the nail painfully, preferably use clippers, and soak feet for about five minutes in warm water before cutting. But above all make sure you wear sensible shoes that are wide enough, and long enough; don't let vanity cripple you. You've only got one pair of feet – so take care of them.

Choppers and specs

Are you lucky enough still to have your own teeth – or most of them? Probably not, as teeth seem to be one of the first things to give up the ghost as one gets older. But **be warned**. If you think you might need dental treatment in the near future, make a very quick appointment with your dentist, preferably before April 1, otherwise you're in for a shock. As foreshadowed in the White Paper *The Government's Expenditure Plans for 1981-82 to 1983-84*, charges for all services, i.e. dental, spectacles and prescriptions are shooting up on that date. The maximum charge for routine dental treatment will be

increased from £9.00 to £13.00. For more expensive items, charges will be at or somewhere above 50 per cent of costs. Also make quite sure you check that your dentist does work on the National Health if you have to have new dentures or crowns. Many dentists now only do this type of work privately, and it could cost you a packet. If you can't find an NHS dentist, contact the Community Health Council in your area and they will give you a list of NHS dentists.

Glasses are another item to come under the axe. The maximum charge for lenses will be increased from £8.30 to £15.00 per lens! What an increase! Again, take care. Many opticians try to sell you new frames when all you need are new lenses. They "won't take responsibility in case the frame breaks". What a load of rubbish! If you only need lenses then don't be persuaded into buying unnecessary frames.

Luckily for retired folk prescription charges won't affect them, but other poor souls will have to pay £1.30 per item instead of £1.00 as now. Seems that we mustn't need teeth, glasses or be ill after 1 April. The Government has certainly picked the right date – April Fool's Day.

Bloody-minded neighbours

If you've got good neighbours, believe me they're worth their weight in gold. Bad, unthinking neighbours can cause untold misery – I know, I've got them. Despite continual attempts to get something done about a large Alsatian dog which my neighbours own, repeated requests to stop the dog from jumping over the wall into our garden, breaking a fence and damaging flowering shrubs that took ages to grow, have fallen on deaf ears. Short of taking out a summons which obviously we don't want to do – has anyone PLEASE got any suggestions? The man has enough wire netting in his garden to put up which would easily solve this problem, but so far it remains rolled up and un-used. It's not the dog's fault; there usually aren't any bad dogs, just bad owners.

COOKERY CORNER

Fed up with meat – or the price of it? Try this for a change. **For four people.**

Potato Pie

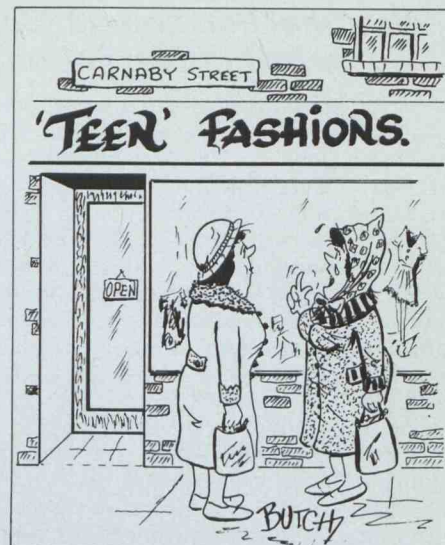
Ingredients:

2lb potatoes
2 onions, peeled and finely chopped
1oz butter or margarine
½lb cheddar cheese, grated
3 eggs
½ pint milk
Salt and pepper
Chopped parsley, if liked

Method

Boil potatoes. When cooked and slightly cooled, dice them. Cook onions gently in butter until soft and transparent. Mix potatoes, onions, cheese and parsley together and spread in an ovenproof dish. In separate bowl, beat eggs, stir in milk and pour over potato mixture. Bake Regulo 4, 350 deg. F. for about 30 minutes. Serve by itself or with crisp green salad.

The Elders in Ethnic Minorities; £1.00 from CRE, 10-12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH. *Black Workers*; free from TUC, Great Russell



"I used to have a good cry at the pictures; now I just come here and remember the old days".

Growing old in a strange country

The problems faced by those who grow old in their own country, in a community and social system known all their lives, are bad enough. Consider then the difficulties, the loneliness, the strangeness of the West Indian, the Pakistani, the Indian, the Chinese and others facing old age far from their native environments. They are British citizens who have earned their right to a peaceful retirement, but public ignorance and prejudice often make their declining years a misery. This social problem is fully discussed in *The Elders in Ethnic Minorities*, published by the Commission for Racial Equality in association with other organisations. Based on a successful seminar held at Keele University two years ago, this 68-page book studies every aspect of the subject and provides valuable background fact and opinion for any debate.

To some extent *The Elders in Ethnic Minorities* complements the TUC's Charter for Equality of Opportunity published recently in *Black Workers*, a free leaflet published by the TUC. In it, the TUC recommends unions to take active steps to turn talk into reality.

Every aspect of trade union activity is covered including negotiating agreements with employers to ensure equal treatment for all workers, whatever their race or ethnic origins, their sex, marital status or religion. Unions should consider setting up special advisory bodies to encourage observance of the charter, not only at the workplace but within the union and socially. Although coloured pensioners are not specifically mentioned except in terms of pensions payable, there is a clear implication that our black colleagues should not be forgotten when unions deal with facilities for the retired.

Street, London WC1B 3LS (send stamped addressed envelope), or through unions and trades councils.

National Pensioners' Convention to be held on February 18

Over a thousand delegates are expected to attend the third National Pensioners' Convention at Central Hall, Westminster on February 18. Two hundred will come from the BPTUAA and its branches. Starting at eleven o'clock and continuing until 1.15 pm, the Convention will be followed by a lobby of Parliament from 2.15 pm until 4.30 pm.

The first Convention, in June 1979, adopted the Declaration of Intent shown in full on this page. The second, in November 1980, made no amendments to the Declaration, but speakers reaffirmed pensioners' support of this Senior Citizens' Charter, perhaps a better name for it. Little progress has been made towards its implementation since 1979 and the Convention in February may see no need to amend the Declaration at this stage. But it will remain a target for the organisations at Westminster on February 18, dedicating themselves to continue pressure on the Government, local authorities and other relevant public bodies for adoption of its basic proposals.

What the BPTUAA is and does

IT'S A long title for a pensioners' organisation—the British Pensioners and Trade Unions Action Association—but most people call us just "the British Pensioners". All the same the full name does cover what we are, pensioners and trade unionists acting together to improve the lot of the retired. We look on ourselves as a union for pensioners, in fact.

The BPTUAA was formed about eight years ago as a committee of several London pensioners organisations with local trade union backing. It was not long before a clear need arose for linking with other such pensioners' bodies elsewhere which also had a main purpose to campaign for better pensions and living conditions for retired trade unionists and their partners. The accent was then, as it is now, on ACTION. Today the BPTUAA, which has no paid officials, everybody serving voluntarily, has grown into a national association with affiliates throughout Great Britain, trades councils, trade union branches and national executives, union retired members' associations, and other bodies sympathetic to the aims of the BPTUAA. There are now over 250 affiliates with most trades councils numbered among them.

The BPTUAA is run like any democratic union body with an annual general meeting which elects an executive committee to run the day-to-day affairs of the Association.

The objects of the Association are to provide and better the facilities for senior citizens, to improve pensions and generally to raise their standards and

quality of life. We act as a focal point for retired workers in their home towns and the local branches act as pressure groups and raise problems with their local and county councils. They foster community spirit among those who find time on their hands after a lifetime of labour. At national level we exert pressure on Ministers, Government Departments and Members of Parliament of all parties.

We work closely with other pensioners' organisation's through the National Pensioners' Convention Steering Committee which is chaired by TUC Deputy General Secretary Norman Willis. Maybe there are differences in emphasis and the way each organisation works to achieve its aims; but the general target, embodied in the Declaration of Intent on this page is shared by us all.

The policy of the BPTUAA covers a wide field. First is our aim to bring pensions up to a level of not less than half the annual gross earnings for married couples and a third for the single retired. Until we reach that target the retired have to rely, in most cases, on concessions and supplementary benefit from the State. That is why we demand a national scheme of substantial concessionary travel for pensioners, energy discounts on winter fuel bills, adequate housing and social services locally and other help to the aged to take away the worry of growing old; and at the end of it all a state death grant enough to ensure a decent funeral without putting the responsibility on the next of kin, if there are any.

Why not join us now?

Senior Citizens' Charter

National Pensioners' Convention

Declaration of Intent

This Convention declares that every pensioner has the right to choice, dignity, independence and security as an integral and valued member of society.

These rights require an adequate State retirement pension. There must be an immediate commitment to a pension level of not less than one half of average gross earnings for a married couple and not less than one third of average gross earnings for a single person, uprated at six monthly intervals.

In addition to an adequate income a pensioner should, as of right:

- live in accommodation which is appropriate to personal need and circumstance with a reasonable degree of choice including sheltered housing;
- be able to call on the full range of community and personal social services to give full support as need arises, including, for example, home helps, meals on wheels, chiropody, television and telephone;
- be able to use a National Scheme of substantial concessionary facilities on all public transport in all parts of the country;
- have ready access to comprehensive free health care on demand;
- be able to maintain a warm and well lit home with adequate heating allowances covering all fuels;
- have full access to a varied and extensive range of education and leisure facilities;
- be paid a regular tax-free Christmas bonus of £20, adjusted in future in line with inflation;
- be eligible for an adequate retirement pension on ceasing work at any time of his or her choice after the age of 60 years, without being subject to an earnings rule;
- be entitled to an adequate death grant irrespective of age.

British Pensioner

Material for publication in *British Pensioner* No 10 should be in the hands of the honorary editor by the end of March for early May publication. The editor is **Jim Nash** who lives at **70 Latham Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7NQ**, telephone 01-303 7619.

Advertising rates in the *British Pensioner* are: Full page £150; half page £80; quarter page £50; eighth page £30; sixteenth page £18; rates for other sizes and publication in more than one issue from the editor. These rates are for camera-ready copy. For other adverts our printer's setting charges are reasonable. Trade unions and affiliated organisations are offered a discount of 10 per cent of the above rates. Enquiries about advertising should be sent to the

honorary editor, Jim Nash.

Distribution of *British Pensioner* is mainly through BPTUAA-affiliated branches and organisations and national trade unions. Individual readers may obtain our paper through any of these. Bulk quantity rates are 6p each for 400 copies or more, 7p each for 200 and up to 399. Postage is extra unless special delivery arrangements can be made with our printer. Please address enquiries about distribution to the editor or the General Secretary, **Fred Baker MBE, at 87 King's Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BQ**, telephone (0474) 61802.

SORRY we are late with this issue, originally promised in time for the AGM on January 30. Delays in the post due to the terrible weather and illness of the editor and some of his contributors are the reason.