

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

MR. M. McGAHEY (Vice-President): Fellow delegates, it gives me very great pleasure to call upon the President of the N.U.M., Joseph Gormley, to present his Presidential Address. Joe Gormley.

CHAIRMAN: The writing of the Presidential Address becomes more difficult year by year as events are slow to reach fruition. In fact, it would have been possible to update my last Presidential Address and put it before Conference for this year because much the same issues face us.

We have, together with other Trade Union leaders, watched with dismay the reluctance of the Western World to make attempts to extricate us from the economic decline, which started by the increase in the price of oil, which was forced upon us by the oil producing nations in 1974. The stronger nations, which we asked to lead a world economic revival have declined to do so. In fact, in countries like West Germany, America and Japan, it would appear that they are quite content to retain the economy running at the present rate. Our own Government has been caught up in this situation, because although it is true that Britain's balance of payments deficit fell sharply in 1977 as against 1976, perhaps this was the result of increased North Sea oil production and therefore a reduction in demand for imported oil. There was nowhere any upsurge in production or the general well being of the country. In fact, industrial production remains lower today than it was in 1973 and a lot lower than when the three day week was in operation. More alarmingly for the Trade Union Movement, the rate of unemploy-

ment continued to rise and to outstrip the increase in the number of job vacancies. In fact, I think it is a disgusting state of affairs when we have up to one-and-a-half million unemployed out of the labour force of a country like Britain; when 6 per cent of the labour force are unemployed and drawing unemployment benefit. It is robbing the country of the wealth which increased production from these 6 per cent would bring and which would increase our wealth to such a degree that there would be no question of any delay in applying all the Socialist principles for a welfare state, which we have fought for for so long and which we intend to keep pressing for whatever the circumstances. If there is no upsurge in the general economy as a result of being led by the stronger nations, then it is imperative that a country like Britain should take a stance and start reflation once again, because we can no longer tolerate this situation. We shall insist that the Government for its own well-being, should take steps to follow the pattern put forward to them by the T.U.C., which we said was necessary to stimulate the economy, such as investment in industries and the restoration of the cuts in public expenditure, which were forced upon them by the outside pressures. We believe that the increased production of North Sea oil should make it possible for us to be leading the nations rather than asking them all the time to lead on our behalf in the hope of benefiting from their actions. We have got to make a stand on this and the Trade Union Movement generally must be seen to be making that stand.

Although we can congratulate the Government on bringing the annual rate of price inflation down from the excessive levels, which were reached in 1975 to less than half of that at the beginning of 1978, they must always remember that this has not been achieved just by the actions of the Government. This has been achieved by many sacrifices of the members of the Trade Union Movement, who accepted incomes policies, which were in many ways completely foreign to the normal workings of a Trade Union Movement. We are quite sure that the acceptance of these incomes policies by our members was a sacrifice, which must not be seen to have been in vain and which must be rectified at the earliest possible moment and the cuts in public expenditure, which the T.U.C. objected to and which the N.U.M. have been completely against, must be restored to the level which will make this system of ours the best system in the world.

I just want to make one comment, to say that I am sure that if we had not been successful over the years in establishing the level of unemployment pay, which makes it comparable to many earnings in industries, we would have seen a revolution the like of which has never been seen in the history of this country. We must never forget, therefore, that it is in the interests of Britain and the British economy that we keep pressing ahead with the provisions of the welfare state, which we enshrined in the objects of the Labour Party and the objects of each and every one of the trade unions affiliated to the T.U.C.

But in all this gloom, which is part of the economic scene at national level, we have to have a look at our own industry. Whilst it is true that the effects of our continued stagnation will inevitably affect the sales of coal throughout the Western World, we have also seen a change round in the whole pattern of the energy scene. We are seeing more and more countries turn away from the growth in the use of oil to the use of other fuels and in fact plans are being made in most countries for the expansion of their coal industries, not only in the Western World, but in the Eastern European bloc as well. America has planned to increase its production by more than 50 per cent; Canada likewise; Russia is pretty nearly doubling the present output

from coal and has ideas similar to most of the other Eastern European countries. Australia, South Africa and other countries like that are also increasing coal production. Thus it is apparent that people are becoming more and more aware of the growing importance of coal.

For our part, in Britain, this Government also has expressed its confidence in the Coal Industry. It has carried on with the effect of "The Plan for Coal", which was accepted by them. It has ensured the necessary finance to make certain that the plans of the Coal Board are not interfered with. The plans I am talking about are the plans to extend the Industry; to sink new pits; make investment in other longer-term pits and also to give a longer life to many pits, which had a shorter life in the original stages. As I have said, they have not tried to change those plans and in fact, it is possible that before this speech has been made, there will be provided in this Industry a Planning Agreement. We shall be the first nationalised Industry to be issued with a Planning Agreement, which has been accepted by all the parties. This will provide for an increasing output of coal per year. But that does not stop us having problems in certain types of coal. Coking coal is affected by the lack of economic growth because its effects on the steel industry is being felt not only in Britain, but throughout the whole of Western Europe, in Japan and in America. In fact, we find that there are plans in West Germany to cut back coal production because they are saying that they are over-producing by six million tons per annum and for the first time, in all our arguments in Europe, our West German colleagues are now finding that they also have got to put pressure on their Government to try to ensure that short-term difficulties should not be allowed to spoil the long-term advantages of ensuring a sound and secure Coal Industry. We have fought the battle in Britain and up to now, we are winning it because of the Government feeling towards the Coal Industry. We have had more than help from the present Government; we have had whole-hearted support and I think they are to be congratulated on the stand they have taken on behalf of the Coal Industry.

This leads me to the point I want to make regarding confidence in the Industry. Having had all these discussions with the Ministers and the Coal Board, and having got to a position where the Coal Industry is now recognised as being an important part of the economy, if there seems to be hesitance in the N.U.M. in accepting the fact that we are an important section of the Economy, no-one else in the country is going to believe it. Any statements which are made regarding pit closures or alleged premature pit closures or any continued threats of industrial action at the slightest provocation in no way helps the situation at all. Now I want to tell this Conference that we still have many enemies in Britain. We have many people who are worried that the Government's support is being given to the Coal Industry. We have seen determined attempts by the C.E.G.B. to try to make plans which would not necessitate them burning less coal, but would perhaps give them the right to import coal from other countries, who can put it on the shores of Britain cheaper than we can produce it. Every word we say which would appear to people to be creating industrial discord, without the real need for such statements, is putting the British public against the miners, and we are doing a disservice to our members if we continue to keep giving people the impression that at the slightest provocation we are willing to just down our tools and say "that's it". I believe in the strike weapon being the ultimate weapon when the time is right. That is the time to use it, but not to threaten to use it because we may be a little frustrated when we are involved in negotiations of any issue at all.

We have to put the consequences against the long-term progress that can be made by ensuring continued Government and public support for our Industry. Therefore, when we are dealing with these issues, we will deal with every pit closure on an individual basis as it comes along. We cannot lump them all together and say that no pit will ever close. Each colliery-threatened closure must be taken on its merits and if there is a case to be made for the pit to be kept open and new areas to be mined, then we shall, as a National Union, fight both the Government and the Coal Board to ensure that no pit is closed prematurely.

On the issue of public support for the Industry, I travel around this country quite a lot. I get many questions from the general public as to why the Coal Industry should be given this support and it is only after we have explained the whole of the energy situation, and the energy short-fallings, which may occur in future years, that they are able and willing to accept that there must be this continued support. We have to carry the public along with us because after all it is the public who decide the Government of the country. Therefore, although it means that we may have disagreements with the Labour Government on the question of investment in Industry and the way they are trying to deal with the economic situation and we may argue with them on the level of unemployment, never let us forget our allegiance to this Government, which up to now has been the only one seen to be fully in support of the plans for this great Industry of ours. Woe betide us if anything we do should be seen to be trying to change the complexity or the colour of the Government in the forthcoming General Election.

Maybe some of you have not seen some of the pronouncements being made by the Leaders of the Party, which would form the alternative Government if it was not a Labour Government. Maybe you have not thought they were serious when they were leading Nicholas Ridley's plans for the Coal Industry. He indicates in them that it would be good for the Conservative Party to say they would break up the nationalised Coal Industry, sell off the strong economic pits, which are making a good return; sell them to private enterprise and keep the other ones, which it is difficult to make a profit on under the national umbrella. Perhaps you may not have believed that such a thing could be possible, but the very fact that such a report was leaked, tells me that they are serious and would attempt to do this if they were given the power to run the country. I can make this forecast to them, that whatever the outcome of the General Election, they have not a cat in hell's chance of breaking up this nationalised Coal Industry. If they attempt to do so, they will not help themselves at all because there will not be one knob of coal produced if they make any attempts to implement the policies which are being talked about by this committee and that great supporter of ours, Nicholas Ridley.

But, of course, there are wider issues even than that, which are being talked about. We have these statements, which are being made constantly, deploring the strength of the Trade Unions, indicating that the Trade Unions are some great beasts, which have been created by somebody, instead of realising that all the Unions are comprised of people, who are determined to be organised together so that on a unified basis they can negotiate for better and better conditions for the workers of Britain. That is the purpose of the Unions; not to create a great ogre, which is going to throw any Government out of power at the slightest opportunity, but a body of people determined collectively to get the best possible return for using their labour to produce goods and services for this country of ours. We will not allow the Trade Union Movement to be completely blackballed by any

political party at all. We are serious minded bodies of people led by leaders, who are elected by members of the Unions and working on behalf of the members of the Unions, and that is what we shall continue to do, whatever the political climate of the country after any general election — and God forbid that we should change the colour this year, whenever the election comes.

But we still have to say to the Government, this Government of ours, that when wages and conditions are being talked about, this is the job of the Trade Union Movement, of organised labour. It is the job of the leaders elected to carry out those objectives and continued Government interference in our attempts to do our work are creating more and more frustrations for those of us at least who feel we should have the right to negotiate. It is not good enough to keep laying down guidelines, which can be the maximums and minimums of all negotiators. You don't need to decide what is 10 per cent of any particular sum of money. You don't need a negotiator to say what six quid a week means. What you do need a negotiator for is to get the right wage for the job in a particular industry having regard to his knowledge of the industry and his special knowledge of the importance of the industry to the economy, and to the well-being of the people of Britain. That is what I was elected to do and I have been frustrated for the last three years in trying to do that job. Ever since 1975, there has been this continual frustration and I am saying from this Conference, that we will not be frustrated in the next round of wage negotiations. We shall negotiate on behalf of our members. It is not a warning; it is not a threat. It is just a statement of fact that I am making on this occasion. It is a statement of fact, which I am guaranteeing will become the cry from all serious minded Trade Union leaders this year, saying that the time is ripe now to get out from under this position which you have put yourselves in and which you have said you have implemented in order to try to deal with inflation. You may have helped to deal with inflation, but it has not helped the standing of trade union leaders or helped to deal with the frustrations of the members of the Unions, who after all, have only one thing to sell and that is their labour in the labour markets. Any period of apparent wage repression inevitably affects their standard of living and will affect their standard of living for a period ahead, unless rectified as soon as possible. That is why we feel that it is in the interests of this Labour Government to say to the Trade Union Movement "get on with your job". "Let us get on with ours." "Jointly we will make a good job of Britain on behalf of the British people." Therefore, I hope that we can look forward to a period of growth and a period of growth in wealth for the people of Britain and growth in wealth of the country itself. Facing that climate, we as an Industry can prosper more than up to the moment. But we will prosper as part of a great British scene.

Once again, I am bound to congratulate this Government on their initiative in setting up for the first time an Energy Commission, which attempts to draw up a blue print for production and use of energy in Britain, particularly the four forms of energy we have, namely coal, oil, gas and nuclear power. Each one of them, along with any other forms of energy, which might be processed at a later date, should form the complete energy plan, each one of them making its guaranteed contribution. The types of fuel which will be in short supply according to the experts by the end of the century, namely gas and oil, should be the ones to have planned production programmes to ensure that the life of these precious fuels is not expended fast and unnecessarily.

It is within that context that the Coal Industry must play its part because

we have this known supply of coal under our feet, which can last for centuries as against the supply of oil and gas, which may last perhaps a decade or 20 or 30 years. We shall continue to press our position on the Energy Commission where we have representatives of the T.U.C. and the C.B.I., plus the consumers, working together to try to get this plan which can be accepted by Britain. It is not easy in these tripartite committees because at the moment each one of us has a vested interest of some kind and it will take many months and maybe many years of deliberation and discussion before we get down to the fact that we are dealing with an energy policy for Britain, rather than just an energy policy for each one of our separate industries, who are working at the moment, not together but in apparent contradiction to the well-being of each other. We shall continue our struggle on behalf of the Coal Industry, because we believe that one of the great things which a working person needs is security of tenure.

I have already mentioned the problem of unemployment and our attempts to deal with it. But there is another way, or many other ways in which we can deal with the numbers of unemployed. It is my firm belief that as we establish better and better techniques in production industries, that is in industries which have to produce wealth to make the country great, to make possible good social services, there will be less and less chance of a big upsurge in manpower in these industries. By their very nature new technical developments will mean less and less jobs in manufacturing industries, but should lead to an upsurge in money being available for all the service industries such as teaching, health, provision of roads, etc., all these things which become part of a good welfare state. If that is the case, then it means that the level of unemployment, as we know it, will never come below perhaps a million at any time in our history unless we do something immediately about it.

We have a ludicrous situation where youngsters leaving school are having to sign on the dole and they are receiving unemployment benefit, whereas at the other end of the upper age bracket, we have men between the age of 60 and 65, who are hanging on because they know that they can't do anything except go on the dole if they finish work rather than wait until they are 65 before they get their retirement pension. Therefore, it seems to us in the trade union movement that one of the important things we should be dealing with is the retirement age. We feel that the Government ought to accept the T.U.C.'s point of view on this issue and make the official retirement age for men at 60, even if it is one on a sliding scale basis. I feel that this has got to be one of the main priorities in any future programme for a government, because not only will it relieve the pressure at the top and provide jobs for the lower end of the age scale, it will say to people who have worked all their lives "we feel you have made your contribution to the wealth of the country and you ought to be able to spend long years of happiness in retirement without the worry of having to work for a living". But it is just not sufficient to bring down the retirement age. There must be a pension to which a man can turn when he reaches retirement, which will ensure that he does not have to go to a different shop just because his income has fallen drastically. We have made quite a few strides in this regard under a Labour Government, but we still feel that the level of pension is not sufficient to encourage people to want to retire early, and it is no use introducing early retirement schemes unless you can convince the working man that he is not having a bad deal by having to retire. He must look forward to the period of retirement, knowing that his financial circumstances are quite good.

For our part, in our Industry, we have made progress as well on this issue. I reported to Conference last year that we have been able to introduce for the first time an early retirement scheme for those of our members with 20 years' and more service underground. During this year, we have been able to negotiate an extension to that agreement, which will give the right to retire earlier to those of our members with more than five years' service underground, but connected of course, to a period of employment in the industry. But, the ultimate which we seek to achieve is for early retirement to apply to all our members to the age of 60 on the surface and 55 years underground. Nevertheless, it is a tremendous stride forward from any position we have ever been in and this is one example of the workings of the Union all the time, dealing with other things than just pure wages. But we have sought to relieve the situation when men do retire by making sure that financially they are better looked after than if they just had to retire on the National Retirement Pension.

We shall continue to press the Board to be the first Industry to recognise that people without underground service should be able to retire at an age lower than the 65 mark that it is today. But we must realise that there are problems for a big nationalised Industry like the Coal Industry, because all of the employers are watching us like hawks and will put the pressure on our own Industry to not do anything, which is different from the national government position. I hope, first of all, we can persuade the Government to accept the position that I have outlined on early retirement. In the national interests it is important that they should do that, but more important than that, it cannot stand as a barrier between us and the Coal Board in trying to reach the Union's objectives on this issue. We must make sure that in dealing with these problems of ours on early retirement, all members of the Union have the same right. By all members, I mean all those with the same qualifications at any time. It must apply to all the members of the Union, but it must also apply to all the people who work for the Union as well. We cannot have fish and fowl when we are dealing with this problem.

And now I come to some of the work we have been involved in on top of the issue I have just mentioned. On the question of wages, I have given a brief reference to our attitude to negotiations this year. I don't think many people will disagree with what I have said, but a lot of people may want to disagree with what has happened in the last 12 months. I can honestly lay claim that because of the actions of the National Executive Committee, we have in a difficult position been able to make it possible for our members to earn almost the wages which were mentioned in the resolution moved by Nottingham last year. Incidentally, many people have claimed ownership of the figures mentioned in that resolution, but the truth is that most of them voted against the resolution. It was the much maligned moderate areas who carried it. That resolution said that we should seek to achieve something. It did not lay down the conditions which should be used to achieve something and I lay claim that since the areas were allowed to introduce incentive bonus schemes, in many instances, in fact I would say the majority of instances, face workers are now enjoying the incomes or pretty nearly the incomes, that were mentioned in that resolution. I don't accept the fact that because we have allowed incentive bonus systems to be introduced, there is arising a lack of unity. According to my information, these incentive bonus schemes, which have been introduced, have been more or less on the same formula and if that is so, then the norms established on the faces, in the pits and in the different areas should be achievable just as easily all over the country. And if that is correct there ought not to be the big difference in

earnings, which I have been told are showing themselves from area to area and pit to pit. Theoretically, at each and every colliery, using the same formula, you should have a norm which would give you the same chance to earn the same level of earnings — because all this is determined by the norm. I don't think I am going to be a leader who says that if somebody wants to work hard he should not be rewarded. I have always been a man who has said that a man's working life in the pits is such that he should earn as much as he can possibly earn on each and every occasion he attends the pit. He ought not to be repressed by any negative measures, which either the Union or the Board can put down, but it should be by his own determination that he should earn the highest possible wages. I am not saying anything that is anti-socialist because this same system that I am talking about applies in Russia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Germany — both East and West. In fact, the rest of Europe have the same system and as I have said before, there is nothing immoral or anti-social in what I am saying. I think the N.E.C. are to be congratulated rather than condemned for having the initiative to use the rules to get the best possible conditions for their members, without the interference from national level on these issues. No area was forced to have incentive schemes. In fact, in many areas, the members were allowed to express their opinion by ballot vote and upset the opinions of some of their area leaders.

But money is not the only thing, because this new attitude to wages has led to a turn up in the production figures. I mentioned earlier about the acceptance of the "Plan for Coal", which this Government has accepted, but that meant an ever and ever increase in tonnages. Unfortunately, up to the beginning of this year, the projection for tonnages had never been achieved and production was slipping year after year till we were reaching the silly situation where we would not be able to meet the markets for coal even in a depressed economy. Now, as I said, there has been a slight upturn and it will be a continuing upturn if we keep on with the same policy and give the lads the incentives, give the man at the coal face the incentive to produce the coal needed in the Plan, and at the same time earn high wages. That is one of the benefits from the Schemes. We have turned the corner and production is increasing.

I abhor the recent personal attacks on myself and other members of the N.E.C. The only crime we can be charged with is that by our decisions we have increased the status and the standards of the British Miners to levels undreamed of before we took office. All the expressions of undemocratic decision making is so much eyewash. I believe that if the representatives of the small areas voted with the big Areas all the time there would be no problem, except that we would not be making much progress. The whole exercise is really about power. Whoever is in the leadership position has got to realise that in negotiations a point is always reached when a decision has got to be made. A national leader cannot afford the luxury of being part of a minority. The present critics should bear this in mind because they may be in the position of authority before long. Leadership means accepting responsibility and no one should be criticised for having the guts to accept responsibility.

Of course, it is not necessary just to produce the coal. We have to ensure that there are markets available to burn and sell all the coal when we have produced it. That is why we have been appalled in our battles in Europe to see the impotence of the Commissioners in deciding on the issues of the importation of coal into Europe. Here we have two Coal Industries — the German Coal Industry and the British Coal Industry, the two biggest in

Europe, not having the possibility of having their productions protected in any way, but at the same time, the Commissioners and all the powers that be in Europe accepting the policy that they should be allowed to keep importing sources of energy and coal in particular from other parts of the world, over which we have no control. I don't accept the fact that it is good for business in Europe to have all the European mineworkers out of work in order that the industries can import coal from either Poland, Australia, South Africa or America or any other source. I think they should first of all use the coal which is being produced in Europe and should be produced in ever increasing amounts. Therefore, there is a need for them to take immediate action to protect in the short-term these two great sources of energy in Europe in order to ensure that the energy will be there in the long run, when these other suppliers of energy will not be as willing to provide Europe with its needs. When they find that they need it at home, they will not be willing to export it to Europe. I think it is appalling that we have to import into Europe between 40 and 50 million tons of coal when at the same time both of us, ourselves and West Germany, have coal on the ground. We should condemn everybody who allows this sort of pattern to continue.

But we are not quite clean in Britain. We have at the moment, and I mentioned earlier, the attitude of the C.E.G.B., the Steel Board, on importation. We have, at the moment, importations of coal into Britain at a time when we are putting coal on the ground and we should insist that the Government takes stock of the situation and we should ban any imports of coal, whilst we have coal which is available in the pits of Britain, which after all are nationalised and a part of the National Economy. As soon as they take these actions, the sooner our members will accept the fact that there is a new pattern for the Coal Industry. It is easy for them to be not convinced if they see that any extra production they have been getting is finding its way into the stocking grounds immediately. We have to be convinced that the Government and the country is willing to burn every ounce of coal we can produce and at the same time, we will assure them that we will produce it as fast and in as good a quality as it is humanly possible to do in the interests of the country. But we need their support in ensuring that every ton we produce is burnt and that is why I was pleased when a statement was made by the Minister of Energy not long ago, that he was seeking to establish a system whereby the total coal production of Britain would be sold and burned immediately. It is important that in production industries like ours, we don't have any hold backs in production because of big stocking problems.

But it is not sufficient just to talk about production and wages, etc. We have to realise that coal production is a dangerous job and we must never forget the issues of producing coal by the safest possible methods and under the best possible working conditions. This is one of the sides of the Union's work, which does not get a great deal of comment, but in fact, occupies quite a lot of our time. I am pleased to announce that the figures for fatalities and serious accidents for last year proved to be the lowest on record. In fact, the figures were the best we have ever achieved. Unfortunately, in the first few weeks of this year, we had one or two incidents, which caused fatalities and which put us back quite a bit. I am pleased to say that the present figures are better, so that the figures are becoming nearer together and we are comparing at the moment, pretty favourably with the figures for this time of the year last year.

But it is not sufficient just to say that. It is true that we have the lowest number of fatalities on record. But each one fatality is a crime against society and we should make sure that conditions are such and the rules and

regulations are respected by everybody concerned to such a degree that fatalities and serious accidents are not accepted as being part of the way of life of mining. But we have an Industry, which can say it has a record which is second to none in any Industry in Britain. We have, during the year, been in discussion with the Board on the new Health and Safety at Work Act on the question of Workmen's Inspectors and the question of training and paying for visits of these inspectors. We found that under Section 123, which gave us great responsibilities and great rights in appointing workmen's inspectors to inspect each and every area of the mine at least once a month and to have special powers in times of accidents, one of the reasons they weren't covered at many pits was that we were leaving it to the local lads to repay them for the duties of being workmen's inspectors. We have now met the Board and we have got them to agree that payment will be made for the inspections on a regular basis. There will be formed at the pits a standard safety committee, which is not a part of the Consultative Committee, but is a committee in its own right and they will determine the group of inspectors; they will determine the schedule of inspections, always making sure that Section 123 is fully implemented. And they will also pay for the training programme for these people to ensure that we have the best possible members of the Union involved in these safety inspections. This is a tremendous stride forward too, and should make it sure that we don't fall down in our duties at any pit whatsoever. There should be the fullest inspections by the members of these workmen's inspectors bodies and we should therefore ensure that each and every part of the pit is complying with the safety regulations. This is a continuous programme and a continuous work for the Union to educate our members about their own responsibilities in ensuring that the safety regulations are not neglected by anybody. It is not sufficient for us to keep saying "well that is the manager's responsibility or the overman's or the deputy's". It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to ensure that the safety regulations are accepted by everybody and fully implemented, even if it means us being unpopular from time to time when we are dealing with our own members.

On the Social Insurance field, this is covered in the N.E.C. Report, which deals fully with what we are doing on social security, the pension schemes and the other schemes that we are talking about and which we have been so religiously fighting for over the years. They are constantly being reviewed and it is too much for me to mention in a speech like this except to say that we shall continue with our efforts to ensure that our members are protected when they are not at work as much as when they are at work. One of the good things we have been able to establish and we shall seek to keep bettering and bettering is the new scheme for the Coal Industry Benevolent Trust. This was set up to ensure that all widows were treated alike instead of having the emotional aspect when there was a big incident where there were quite a few widows involved and which resulted in some widows getting quite good sums of money from charity. We determined that all widows should be treated alike and we set up this central fund to ensure that all widows, even a widow of one single accident should be so dealt with. We hope eventually to include widows from pneumoconiosi, widows of men who are on the colliery books. All widows of miners should be treated alike and we are working towards that objective and we hope to achieve that within the next two or three years. There must be no second-class widows. I think that this is an achievement to be proud of and one with which I am very happy to be associated.

But all this is very nice within our own country. We have got to realise that

there are miners in every part of the world. I mentioned earlier about coal coming into Europe from every part of the world and if we want to achieve anything, I think it is important that the Miners of the world meet together and eventually speak with one voice. I think the time has come when we should forget some of the political dividing lines which up to now have split the whole of the mining fraternities. We find that as we travel around the world and are able to talk to miners that each of them — all the organisations, have the same idea. It is important to be able to bring together the ideas of miners and their organisations throughout the world on coal production, on safety, our attitude to life, what we want our governments to do, not only on energy policy, but also on commercial policies. We want to be able to compare mining industries' ideals, particularly in the developed countries, in order that we can be in a position to help our colleagues in undeveloped parts of the world. I don't feel a great champion if the British miners, the European miners and the Russian miners are having a good standard of life, when our colleagues in countries like Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina — all these countries of South America and all the African countries, are not able to have the same standard of life. It is our job to get together those of us who are really organised to ensure that we are in the strongest possible position to be able to help them. We will never be in that position as long as we are fragmented. I know this may sound heresy for many of the leaders, who over the years have looked with suspicion on the activities of unions in different countries, but I am sure it is time to get away from that idea, because each one of us had a cross to bear in our attitudes over the years. The time is now ripe, in my opinion, for the miners of the world to be talking together and talking to the I.L.O. and to our own Governments in a united way, rather than to keep being isolated within our own little spheres, to do what little bit we can do to help, not only our own struggle against Governments, but also the struggle of less well off miners of the world. This is what I think we should be fighting for and I am pleased with the attitude of the E.C. of the N.U.M. for their full support in the which I and other people have been making to ensure that we are regarded as a truly national union and not just an inward looking organisation. I take the point of view, as a trade union leader, who may not have a long time to go in this position, who may be reaching the end of his period of office, that our job is to create a standard which makes all working people feel that they are getting the right support from their organisation and its leaders and they are able to achieve and enjoy a good life, because what is wrong with aiming for your members to enjoy the best standard of living accommodation. What is wrong with saying to your members "I want to ensure that you have a good wage in order that you can enjoy life, that you can go into good restaurants, you can go into good theatres; you can live in good homes and have a nice car standing at the gate; that you can have colour television". What is wrong in a leader having these objectives for his members. What is wrong in saying that it is my job to ensure that when you retire, you can retire to that same good standard of living, and by ensuring it for your own members, be determined that you can ensure it for miners throughout the world. This surely should be the objective of any national leader. That is my objective and I make no apologies to anybody for saying that, irrespective of criticisms which may be thrown at people for their ideas of life. The way of life ought to be good for miners and their wives and their families because we are negotiating for them and it should be our realisation that that is what we are in office for. Let us be determined that we can be completely united whatever our difference in ideological objectives, but let us be united on the

right things and make sure that anything we do will not be to the detriment of the miners, will not be detrimental to the Trade Union Movement and will not be detrimental to the Labour Movement. I ask for your full support in the forthcoming programme. Thank you.