

UNION CHIEF ADDRESSES DIRECTOR'S CONFERENCE

The Institute of Directors', representing the leaders of British industry, prove their open-mindedness by inviting to address their annual conference union leader Frank Cousins, who is introduced by the President of the Institute Lord Chandos.

"Mind you, as Mr. Cousins is our guest, and I would like to assure you that he may be certain of a courteous hearing, for anything that he wishes to say, he will know as we all do that our courtesy does not extend to being an agreement in advance with anything that you may wish to put before him"

Mr. Cousins, who is Secretary of Britain's biggest union, the Transport and General workers refers (amongst other subjects) to the recent car industry dispute:

"There must be no repetition of the B.M.C. affair. Six thousand workers many of whom had been employed for more than 20 years, were summarily dismissed without consultation. Action of this kind can destroy overnight the results of years of painstaking efforts in building better relations".

Many leaders of industry, he declares, agree with him on this and, he goes on -

"Cousins : "No doubt it is a hardship for directors to be removed from their position, and by this action to lose a part of their income and emoluments - but the dockers I represent, and their wives, suffer a much greater hardship when they lose their jobs"

A questioner ask if Mr. Cousins will use his influence to persuade trade unionists not to resist the advance of automation:-

"The mistaken idea is existant that trade unions at some level are opposed to this. I never yet met a trade unionist who was opposed to the introduction of a machine that would take some of the work off of work! What he is concerned about is the immediate and personal effect which applies to him from the introduction of such measures. We in the Trade Union movement are not entering a recklessly militant period of industrial relations. Indeed, I believe that a most fruitful period lies ahead, in which we shall see a great development and diversification of good relations between employers and employed".