


# The government are selling off the roles of police officers, says federation

 Constables leader Bob Elder warned that officers roles are being sold off by the Government - likening it to the 'Sale of the Century'.

Mr Elder, chairman of the Federation's Constables' Central Committee, listed a raft of roles such as those in road safety, scenes of crimes investigation and crime prevention and said they have been sold off to the highest bidder.

He spoke to a hall full of police officers at the Federation's annual conference in Blackpool last month.

He said: 'Cynics may be led to believe that if the Government can make a success of an organisation that does not have policing at its roots then why have police officers in the first place.'

Mr Elder added that the way the Serious and Organised Crime Agency is being set up, where police officers will lose their status as constables, could be an indication of what the Government plans for the future.

The Queen's speech, delivered on the same day as the constables conference, outlined Labour's plans for further reforms in the public sector and meant that police minister Hazel Blears cancelled her planned appearance at the event.

Last year she faced jeers from police officers as she spoke about plans to extend numbers of community support officers.

Mr Elder referred to the expansion of other traditionally police roles, giving the example of Highways Agency traffic officers,



**Bob Elder: Could there be a 'clearance sale' of police officers?**

who started out clearing debris from roads but have had their role expanded to include duties carried out by roads policing officers.

'Is it not ironic that now the Highways Agency has got its feet under the table they are suggesting that they should take on the role of accident investigators?

'The Highways Agency should be the same as CSOs, an addition to road policing officers, not a replacement for highly skilled, dedicated men and women who perform a vital function,' Mr Elder told delegates.

He added that the service could be at the start of the final 'clearance sale' where all sworn police officers are replaced by CSOs.



**Sale of the Century was the theme for the constables' conference**

**Constables chairman Bob Elder has called on Home Secretary Charles Clarke to clarify the roles of CSOs and civilian investigators in an open letter.**

**Mr Elder hit out at the Labour Government for creating policies which have led to a 'confusing array of people carrying out police duties and a lack of clarity over their roles'.**

**He asked the Home Secretary to answer the following questions for the 110,000 male and female constables the Federation represent:**

1. How would you define the role of the sworn police constable ten years from now?
2. How would you define the role of the police community support officer ten years from now?
3. Do you foresee the widening of powers of CSOs so that ten years from now they would include powers of arrest and the use of reasonable force?
4. Under your current policies the new Serious and Organised Crime Agency will be staffed by civilians rather than by sworn police officers. Is it your intention to allow civilian investigators to take over the investigation of crimes?
5. Do you foresee the sworn police constable being responsible for any specialist duties ten years from now and if so what might those duties be?
6. Will the office of constable be gradually replaced by civilian options leaving constables in a para-military role solely in control of public order?
7. In short, Home Secretary, are we witnessing the end of the 'bobby on the beat'?

## Call to scrap 'bureaucratic garbage' stop and record forms

Police officers are calling on the Government to scrap stop and record forms branding them a 'complete load of bureaucratic garbage'.

Bob Elder, chairman of the Constables' Central Committee, is asking the Home Secretary Charles Clarke to 'urgently reconsider' and put an end to the forms which came into effect in April.

Police officers are now required to record all stops following a recommendation from the Macpherson Report.

He told delegates at the Federation Constables' Conference held this month: 'Officers have had their valuable time wasted filling in a form in which 7 out of 10 people were asked to account for their movements have simply walked away when asked for their personal details.

'And can we blame them? If they give a satisfactory account of their movements, why should they give us their details?'

The figures relate to independent research carried out by Mori on behalf of the Government.

Mr Elder said: 'It adds little to intelligence gathering that was already being done and clearly the reaction from the majority of those stopped makes it clear that they are not in favour of the bureaucracy either.

'And of those that could be bothered to give details, the vast majority gave false details. So much for accountability when Mickey Mouse is just around the next corner.'