



Peter Smyth is vice chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation

## Word of warning

naive person who did not realise that this could affect how officers vote in the next general election. Coupled with partners and relatives, Gordon Brown may lose half a million votes. Forget coming second, if he's not careful, he'll come third!

I joined the police service before the Edmund Davies review of the 1970s and I can remember the strength of feeling and the level of bitterness over pay that was around then. This is similar to that.

Needless to say the anger among officers in London is riding high. Originally it was the older element of the service that felt the strongest over the pay row. But more recently, I'm pleased to say, younger officers are showing more concern over what is happening and are now wanting to get involved and show their discontent.

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Of course, there are some who are angry over the £170-£200 that they've lost, but mostly the concern is about what's going to happen in the future. The bigger issue for officers is what's going to happen in the long term.

We'll have to await the outcome of the poll to find out what officers feel in terms of striking. Personally, I don't believe this is a road many would want to go down. However what the Home Office needs to bear in mind is that there are a 1000 officers in the Metropolitan Police Service who have more than 30 years in the job and so could retire at any time. Now I wouldn't be surprised if many of those are currently looking very closely at their situation. If their pay and therefore their pension isn't going to improve much in the next year, they may just decide they have had enough. To lose that depth of experience would seriously impact on the force.

Obviously police officers are not allowed to be involved in political canvassing, but it would be a