

House of Commons
London SW1 0AA

20th November 1998

I am writing to you to draw your attention to the death of Simon Jones on 24th April 1998, aged 24. He was sent to work unloading cargo inside a ship – one of the most dangerous jobs in the country – with only a few minutes' training'. He was crushed by the grab of a crane within two hours of starting work. I enclose a leaflet outlining the circumstances surrounding Simon's death.

We understand that the Health & Safety Executive, Sussex Police and Crown Prosecution Service are still considering whether anyone connected with Euromin, the company who own the dock where Simon was killed, is to be charged in connection with Simon's death. Our campaign, and Simon's family, are obviously concerned not to prejudice any trial that may arise from Simon's death. We do feel, however, that serious issues have been raised by Simon's death that should not be swept under the carpet.

Simon got his job through an employment agency, Personnel Selection, who should by law have checked that the job was safe for him - they didn't. We have drawn this to the attention of the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, part of the Department of Trade and Industry, asking that this agency be prosecuted for what we view as their clear breach of the Employment Agencies Act 1973. The inspectorate have decided not to do so – indeed a lawyer from the inspectorate told me that he did not want to prosecute Personnel Selection over a technicality. The DTI's technicality, Simon's life.

Simon was taking a year out from Sussex University when he was killed. Increasingly, students and young people are forced to take casual work where the health and safety of employees often takes a distant second place to the making of quick profits from low wages and poor working conditions. We do not want to see more people like Simon killed because of this growing casualisation of working conditions.

Environment Minister Michael Meacher, discussing Simon's death on the BBC on 20th September 1998, said, "I am absolutely outraged that penalties that perhaps are as little as £2,500 to £3,000, which I certainly believe are derisory and insulting, are sometimes awarded in the case of death or serious injury." The most Personnel Selection could be fined for breaching the Employment Agencies Act 1973 is £5,000. The DTI, however, are refusing even to initiate a prosecution.

We are asking you to raise our serious concerns about Simon's death in parliament. In particular, we are asking you to question government ministers over the appalling record of health and safety enforcement in this country and the seemingly non-existent enforcement of legislation concerning employment agencies.

Thank you for your trouble in reading this and for any help you are able to give to our campaign,

yours,

for the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign