

rom The House Magazine's earliest davs it was necessary to attract largescale corporate advertising

to make the publication viable (though never profitable). A year after Mike Thomas and I started it in 1976, the British Railways Board came to us with a series of advertisements with strongly political messages which ran at weekly intervals - 'The most cost-effective railway in Europe' was one such example.

There was one ad which we ran on 22 May 1978 that caused a huge storm. It was inserted by BRB's chief freight manager, Frank Paterson, had the headline 'In 1978 Highway Robbery still exists on a huge scale', and depicted a lorry driver dressed as a burglar privately extracting money from the wallet of a hapless motorist.

While researching our book Holding The Line - How Britain's Railways Were Saved (reviewed generously in The House on 21 January 2013 by Lord Fowler), my co-author and I wrote to Frank Paterson about this particular advertisement. Paterson wrote back:

"The cartoon created a tremendous furore, principally from the Road Haulage Association, the British Roads Federation and the TGWU. In addition to contradicting the figures I'd quoted, we were accused of maligning the industry and lampooning truck drivers and generated quite a lot of vitriolic letters in the press and the trade magazines.

"I then got a message from the Department of Transport that Sir Peter Baldwin, the permanent secretary, wanted to see me. I dealt at principal level so I asked my contact, Jenny Page, to find out what it was about. Deathly silence. Bob Reid was my boss but wasn't around, so

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In 1978 Highway Robbery still exists on a huge scale. Railfreight

I went to see Bobby Lawrence, deputy chairman, and asked him if I should go.

"I still remember his words: "If the permanent secretary sends for you, you go boy." So off I trotted to Marsham Street. I was waiting in the outer office when the director-general of the British Road Federation arrived. I knew him quite well through the Institute of Transport. He was one of the leading public critics of The House

> Magazine entry and had also been summoned by Peter without being told why.

"We were then together escorted into the 'presence'. Baldwin sat us down in front of his desk and proceeded to lecture us as though we were sixth formers in front of the headmaster: 'Don't think you'll impress politicians by this kind of rabble - go away and behave yourselves.'

"It was unbelievable, and when I reported back to Bobby he just laughed like a drain. Sadly it didn't change anything, but it was a good way to get a message across."

Lord Faulkner of Worcester is a Labour peer



had a great 18 months working on The House Magazine in 1983-84, when we still used scalpels to cut and paste the layout

of each page before walking the proofs round to the printers in Clerkenwell around 2am on Friday mornings.

The best part of the week, however, was humping two boxes of freshly printed magazines down to the House to hand-

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deliver on Friday afternoon.

From the Public Bill Office to the police canteen in both Commons and Lords, 'the man from The House Magazine' got a great welcome from everyone. Sometimes they were pleased with the magazine, but in truth they were always pleased to see me because my arrival marked the end of their working week.

John Healey is Labour MP for Wentworth and Dearne