

Comic Relief?

It's not difficult for a good tradesman to find work. I've come across some that don't even need to advertise. Likewise, if you invent something of immense benefit to mankind, you don't need to spend millions telling everyone how good your invention is; it soon becomes self-evident. Ask Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the internet. How much of his hard-earned cash has been spent on promotional material praising his clever idea to all and sundry?

Not as much as the EU spends on promoting itself, that's for sure. A recent article in the *Daily Mail* claims that Brussels has spent over half a billion pounds on propaganda, with the UK's contribution (the sum total of our money being frittered away in other words) amounting to £357 million.

It is quite clear that the EU is engaged in a desperate no-holds-barred battle to shore up its failing credibility as it targets the UK's schools. The *Mail* reproduces quotes extracted from Dennis-the Menace-style cartoons which are both biased and banal. Unfortunately, badly-written and sickening as this claptrap is, circumstantial evidence suggests that it is having its desired effect and poisoning our children's minds. Anyone questioning the EU project is depicted as narrow-minded. Edward Spalton, CIB's President and a veteran of school debates on the EU, used to win every debate. A couple of years back, he found himself on the losing side and it was nothing to do with his performance. Other speakers have also found the going much tougher.

As the article points out, this garbage is not getting into our classrooms behind the backs of the UK government, but with its full connivance. It suggests that Tory MPs supportive of withdrawal may well use the recently-published report from which the above statistics were taken to put pressure on the government to ensure a level playing field in the period

immediately before the referendum and not to use public funds to promote the EU.

While CIB is grateful that papers like the *Daily Mail* publish these EU-critical articles, we are greatly saddened that the paper shrinks back from the obvious conclusion that should be drawn from them – namely that we should leave the EU. On 26th October 2011, it stated quite specifically “This paper has no desire for Britain to pull out of Europe.” and the editor at the time, Paul Dacre, remains in the post today. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, when the referendum campaign gets under way, that we will find ourselves with few, if any allies in the media. Still, with friends like your average press baron and the all too many ill-informed journalists who cover EU matters, who needs enemies?