

APPLEBY NATALIE

From: APPLEBY NATALIE
Sent: 18 March 2004 13:46
To: 'baroper@tiscali.co.uk'
Subject: charter review

Dear Mr Roper,

BBC Charter Review

Thank you for your submission to the BBC Charter Review Team of the 17th March.

On 11 December 2003 Tessa Jowell launched the BBC Charter review with a wide-ranging industry and public consultation. This consultation is supported by a package of survey research and direct engagement with viewers and listeners.

We intend to publish a Green Paper at the end of this year, which will bring together the results of the consultation and other strands of work to form policy options for further consideration. We are grateful for the comments you have made about the BBC and have fed them into the Charter review process.

Thank you for your interest and contribution to BBC Charter review.

Natalie Appleby

As I understand the issues they are

1. how is the BBC to be 'governed'
2. how is the BBC to be funded
3. how 'commercial' can the BBC be

The problems of governing the BBC are mainly invented or exaggerated by politicians. Exactly where have there been failings pointed out by the public? And where have there been problems perceived by broadcasters other than those who wish to benefit from the result of change? How many ministers have resigned with the speed with which the two recent resignations were made by the BBC? The government and the politicians should stay out of the peoples BBC until it is proved beyond a doubt that the measures that exist to maintain standards in the BBC are not working. It has not been so proved. Journalistic sniping is no more proof than knee jerk reactions from politicians disappointed not to be receiving compliments daily. Please do not let my forceful comments obscure the appropriateness of my objection.

The range of things provided by the BBC is staggering, including national and regional radio, radio and TV digital services and the basic BBC TV 1 and 2. The integrity and depth of what they provide is of inestimable value. I have no doubt that they are forces for good in the way that the whole TV and radio market is supplied. The international services are also of huge national and world value. And what does this cost? A fraction of what competitors charge for their services and which are happily paid for by so many. The BBC funding method provides the greatest good for the greatest number. In these times, where most people want to be involved in most issues, it stands to reason that the State should require that there be a wholesome, decent, fair, relevant, balanced and thorough way of people obtaining information relevant to the issues they are concerned about. There

are no guarantees that such service will be provided by any other funding method in the longer term, notwithstanding the intentions at the start. And one thing is certain: any powerful broadcasting service that decided not to like a particular party of government would not be tackled by that government through fear of the consequences. Just look at the blue funk of politicians in stopping the behaviour of the press. Can anyone recall people from the press resigning over an exaggerated story, or an actually invented one? But they go unchallenged. There lies the strength of what we have in the way we fund the BBC. Let us not lose it for a couple of quid a week all round.

My business survives in a highly competitive, highly commercial world where we use and develop our strengths to beat the efforts of our competitors. We can only succeed by supplying what the clients want. So can the BBC and if they are using their strengths successfully it's a sure sign that they are doing what the viewers and listeners want. That fulfils the market needs. And who complains? The people the BBC are beating. And why are they being beaten? Because they are not supplying what the market wants. Marvellous stuff. Go to it BBC, that way the rest will have to try harder. And it is not the job of government to interfere provided that there are mechanisms in place to control excesses. And that's where I started from in para one above.

Politicians are vital and thus valuable. Their tasks are often beyond the skills of Solomon and still they have to try. It must be a terrible load. Make it lighter. Stay away from meddling in something that isn't broken. It is difficult, politics is about proselytising but there are limits to how much of that itch should get scratched!!

BRIAN ROPER