

24th. March 2004

The Minister for
Broadcasting.
Department of Culture, Media
and Sport.

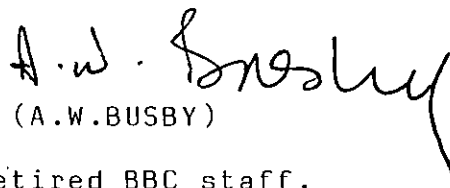
Dear Minister,

BBC Charter Review

I attach a submission for the above review.

Incidentally, I notice that the commercial lobby is starting its usual propaganda attack on the BBC. Just after Midnight on 23rd./24th. March last, LBC had a go, accusing the BBC of waste. LBC was not given a channel to use to attack their competitors and although I have a certain regard for for LBC presenters, and although this is perhaps a trivial example, nevertheless they should be told about it. In my experience, commercial broadcasters are far more wasteful.

yours faithfully,


(A.W.BUSBY)

Retired BBC staff.

25th. March, 2004

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Dear Sir,

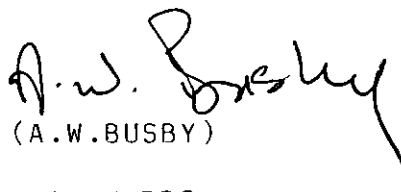
The B.B.C. and The Elstein Report

From what I saw of an interview with Mr. Elstein (?) on BBC television, the above report is the latest attack on the BBC and is in my view, a further attempt to ultimately place the BBC in private hands and reduce its income and thus force it into being financed by advertising. No doubt a very profitable operation for potential Shareholders but the end of independent television.

Far from the BBC being in need of criticism, it is commercial TV which should be looked at - to mention but one item the failure of Digital Freeview and the BBC being brought in to rescue it. How many millions does the Subsidiary set up by ITV owe?.

I have not read the above Report and we must wait and see, but it is clearly an attempt to confuse the public and I am bound to say that any political party that attempts to force privatisation on the BBC will lose my vote. I trust that having voted Tory, for many years, I shall not see the party endorse this cynical review. I attach an aide memoire which may be useful.

Yours sincerely


(A.W. BUSBY)

Retired BBC

copies to:

BBC Charter Review

Liberal Democrats.

An Aide Memoire in Favour of the BBC

March 2004

1. The BBC has twice been examined ,at the request of the BBC, by McKinseys, one of the worlds leading efficiency experts and on neither occasion were shortcomings of any substance found.
2. The BBC is listened to with respect throughout the world both in its english and its foreign language broadcasts. You may recall that Mr. Gorbachov kept up to date on threats made against him at the Black Sea by tuning to the BBC.
3. The jibe that is often made against the BBC that it is financed by public money is false. If you have no TV set you do not have to pay. So you pay for what you get like paying for a ton of coal/. On the other hand, you do have to pay ITV whether or not you have a set. Try going into Safeways for a pound^e of butter and asking for the cost of advertising on ITV to be deducted from the cost.
4. The cost per household of the BBC is less than that of ITV. Look at the balance sheets.
5. All developments in broadcasting have been made by the BBC - colour TV, stereophonic sound, digital sound etc.- the latest being Digital Freeview. You will recall that ITV managed to make a mess of this, their subsidiary going bankrupt and still owing many millions of £s. The BBC had to be called in to rescue the situation. You may have noticed the hurried departure of Mr. Green following a shareholder revolt. His golden parachute was worth £15 million. All in the public interest ofcourse.
6. Any attempt to damage the finances of the BBC would have only one aim, namely to force it to take advertising and thus put profit into private hands. The cost to the average household would inevitably increase. Mrs. Thatchers Government deliberately set out to weaken the BBC (and succeeded) by forcing the (fire) sale of all Transmitter sites and equipment and thus putting a fortune into the hands of an American company.
7. I can think of no argument in favour of hostility to the BBC other than the desire to make private profitand no doubt ill feeling towards the only truly indepedent broadcaster we have. ITV of course is not independent of advertisers wishes.

cont.

8. The BBC has also been attacked as having too many administrators. This of course is not true. If it were so it could not produce its high quality output at lower cost than ITV. This charge was made by Channel 4 some years ago and is part of the propaganda effort by ITV and the tabloid press. You will not find the BBC misusing its channel for improper purposes. Some commercial interests would like to accuse the BBC of inefficiency openly but are 'frit' to do so in Mrs. Thatchers phrase because the facts would show the BBC to be more efficient than ITV.

9. Staff training. It has been standard practice for many years for anyone applying to ITV for a job to be told "join the BBC and get trained and then come to us and we will give you a job". There is not single broadcaster in this country that does not have BBC trained staff in its senior management. Many foreign ~~based~~ and Commonwealth broadcasters have attended BBC training courses.

10. See 5 above. I note from the press that Mr. Green has received a £15 million golden parachute in spite of the digital fiasco. Imagine what would have been said if a BBC executive had received 15 pence above his normal entitlement. Useless to expect equitable treatment.