

From its foundation the BBC has established a worldwide reputation for the breadth and quality of its broadcast output, and the impartiality of its news reports. Ever since its inception, the Corporation has been a patron of the arts, especially music and drama, commissioning new works, as it still does. It has set up and maintains a number of orchestras, and took over the ailing Promenade Concerts in the late 1920s. 75 years later it is still continuing to run them. In 1946 it launched the Third Programme specifically as an arts channel. Although often criticised, its news and current affairs programmes are nevertheless respected throughout the world as a benchmark of impartiality and accuracy by friend and foe alike. No commercially run or government funded broadcasting service could have achieved what the BBC has done. Despite its many faults and failings the BBC has served this country well in peace and war, its broadcasts have been enjoyed and influenced countless millions. It is a priceless, irreplaceable asset not only to this country but the whole world.

#### FUNDING.

Traditionally the BBC has been funded through the licence fee. However through a combination of rising costs and the introduction of new technologies and services this is being pushed ever upwards. However I consider the licencing system to be a key factor to the BBC's success as an independent broadcasting body. Get rid of it and you will effectively destroy the BBC. Without its own source of funding, which the licence fee is, the Corporation will be hostage to whoever funds it, be it government or commerce. My view is KEEP THE LICENCE.

#### STRUCTURE.

Ever since its origins in 1922 the BBC and its predecessors have been at the front of developments in broadcasting. Over the years the introduction of new technologies and services has meant that the BBC has had to set up new sections to handle them, spreading the financial outter ever thinner. At the same time the adding on of all these additional sections and departments has swollen the Corporation to a bloated, unmanageable giant. A commercial firm in the same state would have been <sup>6/</sup>split up and asset stripped years ago. Clearly the BBC needs radical surgery!. In my opinion the BBC should be stripped of a great deal of its broadcasting output that could be funded and carried out by other bodies, ie. local broadcasting, also a lot of its other activities, particularly if they are not generating income for the Corporation. My own vision of a slimmed down BBC is 1. TV channel: 3 NATIONAL RADIO channels, and the WORLD SERVICE. Radio has always been the Corporation's strong point and was its genesis. Only the BBC is in a position to run the World Service. To hand it over to another operator would be to risk its high reputation abroad. Limiting the BBC to just one TV channel with stipulations as to the content of programmes broadcast thereon and their presentation might perhaps ensure that there was at least one source of

high quality <sup>TV</sup> programming and presentation available. With the removal of the need and expense of having to provide so much broadcast output, the BBC will be in a much better position to run it's remaining services. Additionally, due to not having to spend money upon those services that it no longer provides, it should be possible to reduce the licence fee or at least freeze it for the foreseeable future.

MANAGEMENT.

I was surprised to learn that the BBC Governors fill two different functions, one to run the Corporation, and the second to supervise themselves doing it!. Such a dichotomy of roles must cause endless conflicts of interest and no doubt explain some of the awkward and embarrassing situations the Corporation has found itself in from time to time. The two roles should be separated and the Board of Governors allowed to get on with the job of running the BBC as their sole responsibility. Oversight of the governors activities should be vested in a separate body who will also deal with complaints from the public, although not about programmes; unless they have infringed the terms of the Charter or other regulations.

I am unable to comment on the appointment of the governors as I do not know who chooses them, how they are selected, or the criteria used for their selection. Personally I've always suspected that WHO you know counts for more than WHAT you know in these things. THE process of selecting it's governors is one aspect of the BBC's inner workings that could do with some clarification. The pages of the Radio Times could be put to good use here. There should be profiles of the governors and other key people in the organisation, <sup>also</sup> a regular column of news and items of general interest about the Corporation and the people who work for it, After all as they tell us; "It's your BBC".

*P. Carey*