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LYUS STEPHEN

From: ?hil [phil@fish.co.uk]  
Sent: 24 February 2004 13:35  
To: howardm@parliament.uk  
Cc: JOWELL TESSA - MP; griffithsj@parliament.uk  
Subject: Future of the BBC

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I have read the proposal by David Elstein on the future of the BBC with nothing short of horror and revulsion. Over the past decade, our country has seen the number of channels increase, the amount people pay to watch TV rocket and the quality on all channels plummet.

Since the failed franchise auction for ITV licenses, I have seen our quality public service and regional programming broken up. The latest example of this is with the new regional news services for Meridian, which is anything but. The shoddy news output on ITV, and its lack of regional interest/public service programmes in peaktime is shocking. When the franchises were awarded, we were promised more of everything. Indeed, Meridian's early days were wonderful, with an hour of regional shows every weeknight, in addition to the news. I now despair at the poor quality of each regional show, and lament the loss of old favourites, such as Country Ways, Out Of Town, quizzes, Ridgeriders, Chris Peckham's Birdwatching programme...

The rumours surrounding the BBC's charter renewal add further concerns. Any suggestion that the BBC should be broken up, dismantled or lose any of the license fee is worrying. For our £120 a year (that's £10 a month, and considerably cheaper than a subscription to Sky) we get (as you no doubt know) four national TV stations, eight national radio stations, an unparalleled regional radio service (with speech rather than pop music) and extensive Internet services. Oh, and there's the partnership with the Open University, the commitment to impartial news gathering services, the World Service, education opportunities, orchestras, the Proms... it's an incredibly long list.

If the way the BBC was funded was changed, it would destroy everything that we have carefully nurtured and enjoyed for the past 75 years. However you define public service broadcasting, the BBC manages to serve so many people in different ways. ITV and Channel 4 now pay lip service to their requirements, and satellite stations don't have any. We would lose so much if the system was changed.

I write in a personal capacity, and I could write a lot, lot more about why we need to maintain the BBC's status quo, and why ITV should be more tightly regulated to conform to its own commitments. However, I write a weekly television highlights column for the Bracknell Standard, and know that week in, week out, I can only highlight programmes shown on the BBC because they are interesting and worth watching. I lament the fact I can rarely do that for other stations.

Should you wish to talk more with me about this, I'd be very happy to engage with you.

Thank you for reading this, I realise this is a long email, and you must get thousands every day. I apologise sending this as a CC to all three of you, but it makes sense and Jane is my constituency MP.

With best wishes  
?hil Creighton

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