

BBC Charter Review Consultation

28-03-04

Department for Culture, Media

2-4 Cockspur Street + Spert

← (Apologies)

London SW19 5DH.

many thanks for sending me the copy of the consultation document, inviting public comment on the forthcoming review of the BBC Royal Charter.

I have perused this document at least two times, but, as I am a virtually housebound pensioner, I feel that I cannot make many comments on some of the issues which are up for discussion.

So I am offering up one or two general comments.

1) Concerning accountability^{*} of the BBC. (And very much with the 'Hutton Inquiry' in mind.): I understand, having heard of this on the radio, that, in Australia, ~~and~~ a totally independent complaints panel/commission exists - to handle all complaints - from the most trivial to the most serious. Since this body is independent of both the broadcasting medium and the government, it appears to be able to dispense with costly legal reviews. Would such a ^{similar} body be able to oversee such serious matters in this country? (key question on p.30)^{*}

2) p.19 'Advertising' I think it would be a retrograde step to take, if the BBC were to be funded partly or wholly by this method. To my mind the BBC is already engaged in a 'ratings war'. (I find this particularly annoying ^(over))

(2)

as I have no means of recording a 'missed' programme; and often have to make a difficult choice; and it's usually the BBC which wins!)

3) pl8 'Paying for the BBC'

I think, in balance, that the licence fee is the best way to fund the organisation.

For instance, apart from this method being fair; and thus helping output to be available to \neq all - whatever their social status, locality, etc., I understand that some other method would have to be found to pay for radio broadcast output.

I used to work as a postal and telegraph officer in the 1950's and, when I started my career, most people purchased a 'wireless licence', as television had yet to make much impact. So I do realise the benefits of using the licence fee payment (or rather non payment) as a method of policing those who attempt to evade their responsibilities.

To conclude, I would say that over my lifetime I have come to regard the BBC as, first a 'friend in the ~~corner~~ corner', listening with my parents for 'News from the Front' during the war years, ^{(through} ~~and~~ always having a radio to hand - ~~from~~ ^{from} the old 'Valve and accumulator' model, through the 'portable'; the 'transistor', and now to the 'digital product'; with the BBC as being regarded as reliable, objective and mostly impartial.

In fact, I used to exclaim - 'It was on the 'Beeb' - or must be true!'

I sincerely hope that this will be an expectation that will be lived up to, by those I loosely referred to. And I trust you will find my somewhat prosaic comments of value. Yours faithfully, E. M. MAKINSON.

E. M. MAKINSON.