

(Mr) W. B. Springall,

January 15th, 2004.

Re "Review of the BBC"

Dear Secretary of State,

I would like to add my views to the feedback from the general public regarding the BBC - which I used to hold in high esteem - but not now, as it has changed for the worse in recent years.

There are five specific points which I would like to raise as an indication of the objections that I have to the current way that the BBC is run.

- ① There are very few programmes worth watching on BBC television.
- ② Background music/other unnecessary music (Radio and Television).
- ③ Advertisements ("trailers") (Radio and Television).
- ④ Those annoying dancers between the programmes on BBC1.
- ⑤ That hideous drumming noise used on the BBC news.

The BBC used to be highly regarded for its programming, but you could not say that now. There seems to be a constant dumbing-down, for example on BBC radio 2 the "Jeremy Vine Programme" which has replaced the "J.Y. Prog", and on television, as an example "They think it's all over" - which has become stupid, crass and childish, with excessive use of bad language (It used to be a good programme). Unfortunately, similar comments can be made of many programmes.

There is also the ruining of programmes by the addition of background music or intermittent music, and the use of "frantic" or other idiotic camera-work. Even programmes such as Panorama and "The Money Programme" have music on them - which destroys the programme's integrity - and makes it that you cannot take them seriously.

Then there are property/gardening/holiday programmes where there is beautiful scenery or greenery, and the only sound which ought to be heard (apart from the participants and presenter) are the ambient sounds, especially the sounds of

nature, be it wildlife/wind/sea/rain, or silence (to show how peaceful it is) - but of course the BBC decides to ruin the atmosphere by inflicting music on us (usually of a loud and irritating type) Even programmes like the "Weakest Link" would be much better without music - then you can concentrate on the questions and answers. I love music, but I want to enjoy in it's own right - not have it inflicted on me in the form of musical-wallpaper. It seems that you are not allowed to watch any programme nowadays without having "music" inflicted on you. And the fact is that if some viewers are so "sad" that they require music on everything then they can add their own, using their music system - but, if there is "added" music on the programme and people do not want it, there is no way that they can remove it. These comments apply equally to speech radio programmes, such as on Radio 4.

Then there are the adverts: there must be as many on BBC television as there are on Commercial Television, and they are repeated ad-nauseum - and far from making you want to watch the programmes that they are promoting - they actually have the opposite effect, partly because you get so sick of seeing them (and I do not watch much television !) If the BBC wants to have all these adverts then why don't they take paying adverts, and get rid of the licence fee ?

There are those annoying "dancers" as well, that they put on between programmes on BBC1. Why do they inflict such stupid, crass, irritating things on us, what is the point ? And I'd ask the same question of that drumming noise used on the BBC1 news.

BBC radio 4 has many good programmes, and you used to be able to just leave it on and see what was coming on next - but you can't do that now because of all the annoying adverts between every programme. They are long-winded, irritating, and repeated endlessly - and are not even related to the programme. There would be some sense in it if, for example, after a "science" type programme they informed you of another science type programme coming up. But that would be too sensible for the BBC, wouldn't it ! (So long as the "advert" was *occasional*, very brief, did not have music on, it and did not tell you half the programme - as is the usual way with the BBC radio adverts). Thus I now just switch on for the actual programme that I want, then switch off the moment it ends - to avoid adverts. This is hardly the way to run a radio station - driving people away - and we pay for this ! Then there are the bits of music put into speech programmes for no reason - at which point I usually switch off. (The BBC seems to have a "fetish" for putting bits of piano music on programmes) Also, when is radio 4 going to sort out "You and Yours" - it must be the most ridiculed programme on BBC radio, but in fact with some sensible tweaking it could be made into a worthwhile programme (So why isn't it ?).

BBC radio 2, a station that I do not listen to very much now - partly because of all the adverts (every half-hour), usually someone yelling at you, with loud music on at the same time, often telling you what has been on - who gives a damn what has been on ? In any case we know which programmes we want to listen to - we don't need telling, and quite a few adverts are for digital radio, which I do not possess. (And I've no intention of getting one whilst BBC radio broadcasting is as

it is). These adverts are so annoying that I now switch off the moment one comes on. Another thing about radio 2 is the way so many presenters now do not "introduce" music - they just "bung it on", then interrupt it and talk over it. What is the point of playing music and then ruining people's enjoyment of it by talking over it? It is so annoying, and unprofessional.

All the points that I have raised are things that annoy many people - and have been raised many times in many places - but the BBC takes no notice. *The BBC wants our money but they don't want to listen to our criticisms.*

My Television Licence is currently coming up for renewal - and I'm seriously wondering whether to renew it - as the only way to "get back" at the BBC for not listening is to get rid of the television, and then not renew my licence. If I do renew this year and things don't improve, then next year I will definitely not renew it.

I once rang the BBC's comment line to complain about all the adverts on BBC radio (not the first time that I'd rung incidentally) and the man that I spoke to argued with me that they were "trailers" not "adverts". Surely the people who take these calls should be there to convey the comments - not to argue semantics. I do not often ring now as it seems to be a total waste of time. I would add that I have also rung to make complimentary comments about programmes, as I think that it is important to also give positive feedback.

Yours sincerely,

W.B. G. [Handwritten signature]

P.S.

A suggestion for the BBC, instead of all the annoying adverts, why not make a 15 minute programme detailing all the "promotions" (so long as it is not done in the same "loud, in your face" way as their adverts). It could be broadcast twice or even three times a day. With this method of promotion the listener/viewer has the opportunity to choose whether they want to listen/view, without the intrusiveness and annoyance caused by the current system. If these promotional programmes were put together in the right way I would actually watch them! This idea could be used for radio and television.