

March 20, 2004

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Dept for Culture Media and Sport
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1) The BBC has the best news, documentaries, reports and education programmes. (But see item 4).

These could NEVER be done as well by independent companies.

2) The licence fee is the best method we can think of so far.

3) There should be some regulation to ensure impartiality - but Greg Dyke need not have gone during the recent trouble. Impartiality should not be overdone, as for example by showing someone with a tiny unrepresentative view, which unbalances the argument.

4) There are probably too many top bosses. However, in some ways they lack power. For example:

The biggest problem in broadcasting is the prevalence of so-called background music and noise in serious programmes. The BBC have recognized this nuisance, but do not seem able to control their producers. Yet it should be a condition of the Charter that they do control the problem. The BBC should set an example. They have the ability to enable digital viewers to switch off the music, but the BBC must have the will to do it.

Re **unwanted music** during a documentary many people want to listen and learn and not be distracted by music. Good music distracts people who like it elsewhere. In addition elderly people are not able to cope with both music and the talking. There are **millions** of people with this problem, but they are ignored. To say that some people like the programmes is not good enough.

There is a tendency to introduce music into news programmes. It must be stopped.

Dr Geoffrey Watson
