

RESPONSE OF K G SPEYER

The Secretary,
Non Executive Directors Review,
Room 2142,
1 Victoria St.,
London SW1H 0ET

August 31st, 2002

Dear Sir,

Protection of collective interests.

As a private investor I comment as follows:

Bearing in mind that 'organised' investors via an institutional bureaucracy, (i.e. fund managers, etc., etc.,) speak indirectly only, being agents of investors, savers, pensioners, etc.

The agent has undue importance and influence and often personally has no shareholdings in a company.

The agent 'man of straw' institutional employee is often overendowed with greater than deserved importance because of the number of shares/votes he represents as agent. These straw persons are responsible and abetted by the Stock Exchange and others who deem this co-operation to be in their interest.

These men of straw are responsible for Board overindulgence and excess and for not attending AGMs to listen to the concerns of attending shareholders, let alone to contribute to the AGM debates. These 'agents' often fail even to vote.

The Stock Exchange panders to this status by encouraging brokers to put individual shareholders into nominee accounts, thus for all practical purposes, making most of these shareholders nonpersons as far as their companies are concerned, since they have become invisible. Today the greatest number in the shareowning statistic of companies are nominees !


The AGM attending shareholders are presented by the likes of BP with a voting pie chart, an enormous chart behind the assembled Board, 'in your face' showing votes in favour at approx. 95% plus, without these pie charts showing the true position which is that only about 50% votes were cast !

Nevertheless it is common for this Board and most others to proclaim to the public 'we have an overwhelming support'.

One is aware that some AGM attendees make wearying remarks and speeches but that is no reason or excuse to try to abolish the AGM, which is the agenda of some, like BP for instance, which company has already dispensed with show of hands voting structure.

AGMS need to be made more proactive, not less.

Yours faithfully,


K.G. Speyer