

Television: Rules of Coverage

On this page is the written evidence received and accepted by the Committee as evidence for the ongoing inquiry into Television: Rules of Coverage. The written evidence is available as a consolidated pdf version and as individual html files.

Written evidence published by the Committee for the inquiry into *Television: Rules of Coverage*

TV 01 ITV News

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TV 03: John Angeli, Director of Parliamentary Broadcasting

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Written evidence submitted by ITV News (TV 01)

ITV welcomes the committee's decision to conduct a light-touch review of the rules to "consider the current rules of coverage for the Chamber, Westminster Hall and Committees, and whether any change is required."

First we would like to put on the record our appreciation of how the coverage of the Chamber has evolved under the present rules to provide a more imaginative and attractive range of shots for broadcasters to use. It is in that spirit of evolutionary change that we make this submission.

We suggest the committee considers possible changes under two headings: 1). Positioning of cameras in the Chamber and 2). A less prescriptive approach in the Specific Guidelines for Picture Direction in section 2 of the Rules of Coverage.

1. Positioning of Cameras in the Chamber: The existing cameras in the Commons Chamber provide a shot looking down on to the Chamber from above. This mitigates against being able to convey the intimacy of the Chamber, and in particular disadvantages those speaking from the front bench. Far too much of the coverage of front bench speakers is of the tops of their heads as they look down at their notes or straight across the Chamber at the benches opposite. The viewer is unable to look the member speaking in the eye which could lead to material from the Chamber not being used. For instance when Health Secretary Andrew Lansley made a statement to the Commons about breast implants this year both ITV and BBC national news programmes used an interview clip with him recorded outside the Chamber. Viewers watching the interview clip were able to see the minister's eyes and face whereas the shot from the proceedings in the Chamber was not as clear, although similar points were being made. The "top of the head problem" gets worse the nearer to the front bench you get because of the V-shaped floor of the Chamber. Cameras positioned lower down and able to look across rather than down on to the floor of the Chamber would help to resolve this issue. They would also help to portray more faithfully the intimacy of the Chamber so more accurately meeting the Statement of Objectives set out in point 1 of the Statement of Objectives – "to give a full, balanced, fair and accurate account of proceedings, with the aim of informing viewers about the work of the House."
2. A less prescriptive approach in the specific guidelines: The Statement of Objectives (quoted above) provides the director and the Director of Broadcasting with straightforward, commonsense guidance on televising the House. We consider that wherever possible they should be left to work within the parameters of those guidelines without detailed instructions about what kind of shot they can, or cannot, use. For instance in Section 2 (b) we would suggest that sub-sections (i), (iii), (v), (vi) and (vii) should be scrapped and (ii) shortened to "The camera should normally remain on the Member speaking." This would provide the director with the opportunity to vary the shots of the Member speaking, to use close-up or head and shoulders shots as appropriate and to allow more general reaction shots. As broadcasters we want the camera focussed on the Member speaking as much as possible so that when we want to use a clip in our news bulletins we can be confident we will see the Member speaking, but more imaginative reaction shots would be very welcome. Similarly, given that the Statement of Objectives sets the tone of the coverage, we feel that the whole of 2(c) Special Camera Techniques, that is (i), (ii) and (iii), could be scrapped as well. We also ask the committee to consider two further changes. Point 2 (a) (iii) of the guidelines lays down very strict rules for

televising divisions, which seriously limit our ability to convey, using pictures rather than a commentary, the drama and tension surrounding big votes. First we would like to have sound during divisions, second to allow the director to use a variety of shots rather than being limited to a wide shot and third to investigate the possibility of using cameras outside either end of the Chamber to show Members entering and leaving the Division Lobbies. Perhaps this last proposal could be done as a trial with the committee viewing footage before deciding whether or not to proceed either for all Divisions or for occasional ones on crucial knife-edge or especially significant, votes. The second change we would ask the committee to consider is whether the restrictions on filming the public galleries in 2(a)(i) could be relaxed when people are mentioned on the Floor of the House – for instance the retirement of Drill Sergeant Eddie Mackay in December last year or Mr and Mrs Clough when their campaign was raised at Prime Minister’s Questions in January.

Thank you for the opportunity to make our case to the committee for what we feel are measured and appropriate changes which will allow televising of the proceedings of the House to meet the Statement of Objectives in the existing rules of coverage more fully than they do at present.

February 2012

Written evidence submitted by ITN (TV 02)

ITN fully supports this review and the detailed consideration that your committee will be undertaking of this important issue. It is now 23 years since TV cameras were first introduced into Parliament. We believe that those reforms - and the subsequent changes to them – have made Parliament more transparent and have improved the democratic process immeasurably. It is worth noting in this context that the most recent survey on this subject found that two thirds of MPs believe that televising Parliament has made it more transparent. Furthermore, 93% thought that a Parliament closed off to television would now be unthinkable (BBC Parliament, Com Res Survey in 2009).

Fears that were expressed over two decades ago have clearly not materialised, and this progress provides a good foundation for the rules to be developed further with the goal of opening up parliamentary democracy on television even more. It is our firm belief that the more open Parliament is, the more we will be able to encourage public engagement, widen understanding of parliamentary processes and improve transparency.

1. BACKGROUND

ITN is the UK's biggest independent producer of public service broadcast news. The news services we produce for our main customers - ITV and Channel 4 - reach nearly 10 million people every day. ITN will also resume news provision for Channel 5 later this month, meaning we will again supply all three main commercial PSB broadcasters in the UK. We therefore play a crucial role as the BBC's main competitor in the provision of high quality, impartial news, reaching a diverse cross-section of the British population.

ITN's award-winning journalism is also watched by millions more viewers worldwide, through global partnerships with outlets such as Reuters, CNN and NBC, and platforms including Livestation, YouTube and MSN.

As well as providing high-quality, trusted broadcast news output, ITN operates three other divisions: footage sales arm ITN Source; video creation business ITN Productions; and advisory services from ITN Consulting.

ITN has four shareholders: ITV plc (40%), Daily Mail and General Trust (20%), Reuters (20%) and United Business Media (20%).

All of our news services use – to differing degrees – footage from Parliament. Use of Parliamentary footage is at the editorial discretion of each news service, and current rules mean that the material we use most often in our reports comes from the main Chamber. We frequently use sound bites from exchanges at PMQs and high profile Commons statements and debates of national interest. We use the footage as pictures to illustrate major Commons events such as Budget Day, or particularly dramatic debates where the story is very much about what occurred in the Chamber. We try to avoid using shots of "green benches" as "wallpaper" to illustrate our news reports, as that can be off-putting for viewers and often does not help illustrate or explain the issue being debated. We do however use a considerable amount of Committee material on Channel 4 News, but it is very rare for any of our news services to use footage from Westminster Hall.

2. ISSUES WITH THE CURRENT RULES

Significant progress has been made since the first television cameras entered the House

of Commons in 1989, and we welcome the fact that we are now able to use a greater variety of shots than in the past. However we believe there are several issues with the present rules which hamper our ability to reflect the widest possible activity in The Chamber, Westminster Hall and Committees. Our viewers are hungry for variety and insight, and we believe that the current rules prevent us from reflecting the full range of work that elected representatives are conducting on our behalf.

2.1. Style and presentation and special camera techniques

The current rules set out quite a prescriptive list of rules for the director (at 2(b) and 2(c)) concerning style and presentation and special camera techniques. These rules restrict our ability to capture the atmosphere of the Chamber and restrict us in the filming of reaction shots, thus curtailing our ability to provide an interesting view of proceedings that our viewers are more likely to engage with.

We would suggest that it is possible to keep the general principles of providing a "full, balanced, fair and accurate account of proceedings" without having such strict rules. Indeed, the conventional "grammar" of television news would mean that MPs would still normally be filmed in mid-shot, and would be in vision for most of the time when they are speaking. The overarching result of relaxing these rules would be to give the director more flexibility to provide a more natural view of the proceedings.

2.2. Camera positions

At present our camera positions in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and the Committees are limited to high angle shots, looking down on MPs' heads. This creates a distance between the viewer and what is happening in real time and mitigates against capturing the intimacy of the chamber, which is particularly important when filming the front bench. The current shots match badly and do not run smoothly with the TV news footage that appears in the rest of our broadcasts. This means we are much less likely to use sound bites from speeches in the Chamber.

We therefore recommend that the Committee consider having cameras at a lower level in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and the Committees. Eye level shots would make the resultant coverage less remote and more engaging for viewers and provide a better indication of the atmosphere in Parliament. Essentially it would mean we would be more likely to use the footage in our broadcasts.

2.3. Restriction on filming galleries

The Specific Guideline for Picture Direction 2(a)(i) prohibits us from filming shots of particular visitors in the Galleries. This impacts on our coverage of Parliament, as occasionally a notable guest to the Chamber is referred to, or even welcomed to the Chamber at PMQs or during a significant debate. Without a cutaway shot of that person, it is much less likely that the remark will be used in news bulletins.

Our recommendation would thus be for the Committee to consider changing rule 2(a)(i), to allow shots of particular visitors in the Galleries, perhaps with a specified time limit on how long the shot can last or and how many times the shot can be shown.

2.4. Divisions

The Specific Guideline for Picture Direction 2(a)(iii) says that during divisions a wide

angle shot of the chamber may be used. Divisions are sometimes exceptionally newsworthy and it would significantly improve the news coverage if the director was allowed to use a variety of shots from the Chamber during divisions, showing MPs going into the Lobbies to vote and to broadcast sound from the Chamber.

We would therefore suggest that the Committee consider relaxing the rule 2(a)(iii) to allow for a much more interesting and engaging broadcast for viewing audiences.

2.5. Westminster Hall and interviewing MPs

Our ability to conduct interviews with MPs on the Westminster estate has traditionally been limited, hampering our ability to capture the views of parliamentarians as news is breaking. Exacerbating this - as the tuition fees riots showed - there are occasions when access to MPs has been severely restricted for security reasons. Furthermore, even when no security risks stand, MPs are often reluctant to head to Palace Green or Millbank. This has significantly hindered our ability to gather breaking news stories and engage with a wider variety of politicians who are keen to comment but unable to commit the time (or indeed simply want to avoid adverse weather conditions).

Accordingly, we welcome the Committee's recent decision to allow extra interview points in Westminster Hall and the Lower Waiting Hall. Going forward, we would also propose a reserved position for accredited broadcasters in Westminster Hall where broadcasters can turn up and interview MPs without the need to obtain permission in advance.

2.6. Committees

Since Bowtie is limited in the number of committees it can film and sometimes a committee which is not being covered live becomes newsworthy, we would ask for the ability to film and broadcast those events held in House of Commons committee rooms which are not already being covered by Bowtie. We would also recommend the flexibility for broadcasters to be able to film such committees at relatively short notice in order to give us more opportunity to cover MPs in their own environment.

3. WIDER CONCERNS

As the Committee may know, discussions took place between the Sergeant at Arms and broadcasters at the end of last year about broadcasting in the Commons in general. Without going into detail here - because strictly speaking this falls outside of the remit of this review - we arrived at a number of recommendations that we believe will contribute towards the goal of opening up access to Parliament. These recommendations include measures to show - and speak to - MPs in as wide a way as possible, suggesting more camera positions in the Palace where we can interview MPs and for instance on special parliamentary occasions or crucial votes, a pool camera to be able to capture the atmosphere in areas such as Portcullis House Atrium, Committee Corridor and the Colonnade.

However, there is one important administrative issue that we believe does fall within the remit of this review: the process we have to go through to obtain permission to film. It is our strong recommendation that the Committee amends the rules to ensure there is only one point of contact that broadcasters can liaise with to obtain permissions to film.

4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, there are several recommendations we would like the Committee to consider as part of its review:

- Relax rules concerning picture direction for the director in the Chamber at 2(b) and 2(c) to be replaced by application of the general principle of providing a "full, balanced, fair and accurate account of proceedings."
- Allow lower level camera angles in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and the Committees.
- Change rule 2(a)(i) to permit shots of particular visitors in the Galleries of the Chamber.
- Relax the rules restricting filming certain parts of the Chamber during divisions at 2(a)(iii) to allow for a variety of shots to be used.
- Introduce a reserved position for accredited broadcasters in Westminster Hall to allow for interviews with MPs without the need to obtain permission in advance.
- Introduce one point of contact for obtaining permissions to film.

I hope this brief summary of our recommendations is helpful to the committee in the initial stages of its inquiry.

February 2012

Written evidence submitted by Director of Parliamentary Broadcasting (TV 03)

Introduction

The Committee will be aware there has been a significant change in the televising arrangements over the past year with the ending of PARBUL agreement. It might be helpful therefore to reflect on these changes before moving on to other aspects of Parliamentary coverage.

In August 2011 Parliament assumed the costs of the televising operation as well as maintaining its existing commitment to equipment costs. This was as a result of a decision by UK broadcasters to cease funding the service.

Under the new arrangements media organisations in the UK and abroad are able to obtain a licence from the Parliament rather than PARBUL which grants them access to a televised feed from the Commons and Lords chambers as well as Westminster Hall. Over the past 6 months the number of licenses issued has risen from 25 to more than 100 and includes Al Jazeera, Agence France Presse, the Hansard Society, The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, Spectator, Independent, Times and Daily Mail.

We continue to charge for televised committee coverage based on requests from media organisations. Since August the wider range of licence holders has seen requests for Chamber and Committee coverage from British Forces Broadcasting Service, Bloomberg TV and Liverpool FC Television (Hillsborough disaster debate October 2011).

Televising of the Commons

The key requirement for the television director is to provide a full, balanced and accurate account of proceedings in the chamber with the aim of informing viewers about the work of the House.

The television director is guided by the rules of coverage. These rules have been updated in consultation with broadcasters over the past two decades. The most recent change to these rules came in December 2006 when the Speaker agreed to a recommendation from the Administration Committee:

“...a greater variety of shots of proceedings in the Chamber will be allowed than is the case at present, including a greater use of reaction shots in order to illustrate the mood of the House, and the provision of a low-level atmospheric sound-feed during divisions rather than the current complete silence.”

This change, welcomed by the broadcasters, has helped the TV directors in providing viewers with a visual narrative of Commons procedure as well as providing engaging, authoritative and appropriate coverage of proceedings for both continuous coverage and for the provision of sound bites for news coverage. Feedback to the Director of Broadcasting from the public and from broadcasters has confirmed that these developments have been widely appreciated and have helped to aid effective public understanding.

The Committee will be aware of a more recent request from the broadcasters for an “eye-level” shot of speakers at the dispatch box which, it is argued, would provide a more natural angle for viewers.

In order to establish if such a shot was achievable filming took place during the recent recess. Some illustrations of the types of shots which can be achieved have been recorded.

A copy is available for committee members to review. There are a number of issues which the committee may wish to consider:

- i. Is it practical or desirable for cameras to be positioned at floor level in the chamber for either members or staff working in the chamber?
- ii. Would a new camera angle assist viewers in providing a “full, balanced and accurate” account of proceedings? And by making more of other Members being in the background would this have an unintended effect on Members behaviour in the Chamber (eg ‘doughnutting’ behind Members speaking), and during debates with fewer Members being present would it make the Chamber appear even emptier?
- iii. If there is interest in exploring this approach, further filming (not for broadcast) would be required during a number of sittings to fully understand what impact new cameras would have in a working environment and to more clearly assess the editorial proposition.
- iv. How would such a change be funded?

The Rules of Coverage also provide instructions for what should happen in the event of disruption. It is worth noting that these rules were put to the test and adhered to by the television director in July 2011 when a member of the public disrupted proceedings during evidence to the Culture Media and Sport select committee in July 2011 – coverage ended as soon as the Chairman adjourned the session.

Online

Viewing figures on the Parliamentary website have seen significant growth over the past year. Views of Commons Chamber coverage increased from 287,000 in 2010 to 659,000 in 2011. Committee views rose from 195,000 in 2010 to 604,000 last year.

The number of requests for archive footage from members and the public continues to rise, however requests from the education sector is disappointingly low. We recommend that this issue of access to Parliamentary video, including the 20 years of archive, is further explored by the Broadcast Unit in conjunction with other departments and that a strategy is developed which would facilitate greater access to the archive.

The potential for wider distribution of Parliamentary content via the internet has been commented on in previous reviews of the Rules of Coverage. A number of factors have mitigated against this development including the PARBUL licensing arrangements and associated fees as well as the absence of a digital solution for storage distribution and archive which would aid access for the public as well as MPs and Parliamentary staff. These are now areas of focus for the Broadcasting Unit.

At the end of 2011 the Broadcasting Unit was approached by a number of national newspapers, and separately by the Press Association and by Downing Street. All are keen to take advantage of the new licensing arrangements and provide greater coverage of Parliamentary proceedings. They have requested an encoded video feed at multiple bit rates for distribution across their digital properties. The national newspapers involved have indicated that they are willing, for their part, to bear the costs of the set-up.

The attraction of establishing a new approach to distribution for online outlets is that it holds out the possibility that all video coverage of procedural content, which is currently restricted to Parliament's website, is made available to national and local media and other interested parties including Government departments. This method of delivery will be particularly critical to local news media across the UK.

Our recommendation to the committee is that a one year trial of this service is initiated. Over this period we would invite feedback from participants to establish take-up and future requirements.

Licensing

The current internet licence reflects many of the conditions attached to the broadcast licence, including the need for publishers to observe the Rules of Coverage and Usage. It also specifies a number of areas specific to online such as embedding of video material. A number of news organisations have indicated that the terminology of some of the terms and conditions, such as those relating to advertising and watermarking are ambiguous.

Our recommendation to the committee is that there is a review of the internet licensing arrangements to clarify any outstanding areas of concern.

The current licenses are silent on organisations taking stills from the footage. The Parliamentary Recording Unit treats stills as extracts from recordings and this works well. However it would be useful to make this explicit in the license arrangements and to make it clear that a license is required to take and use a still.

January 2012

Written evidence submitted by BBC (TV 04)

The three main UK broadcasters welcome the Administration Committee's inquiry into the broadcasting rules relating to the coverage of the Chamber, Westminster Hall and committees. We are keen to work with the Parliamentary authorities to better reflect the fact that audience interest in Parliament is at an all-time high. Parliament has changed the way it conducts business - through Urgent Questions and backbench committee petitions - Parliamentary actuality is more prominent in TV bulletins and we are confident that coverage can be further improved to bring it more into line with the quality that audiences now expect to see. Some suggested changes are set out below:

- Increase the use of relevant listening shots in debate coverage
- Encourage director of broadcasting to explore improved camera angles to better show faces of frontbench and other Parliamentarians as they speak - current top-shots of speakers are unflattering and excluding. This makes it harder both for the audience to relate to the debate and for us to capture the intimacy of the Chamber.
- Permit filming of visitors to galleries at the point when they're specifically referred to on the floor of the House (on the occasion of the retirement of the doorman Drill Sergeant Eddie Mackay in December 2011 for instance)
- Film the Division lobbies on a trial basis

February 2012

Written evidence submitted by William Turrell (TV 05)

Introduction:

My name is William Turrell. I'm an individual with no past/present connection with any broadcaster, though I've always had a keen interest in technology, broadcasting and politics.

Executive Summary:

Having watched your oral evidence session today:

- (paragraph 1) I'm in favour of showing selected individuals in the public gallery and relaxing restrictions on 'listening' shots, at no extra cost
- (7) I think adjusting the camera angles to better show front bench speakers probably is value for money
- (9) I think divisions should be filmed in some way, even if only occasionally for educational purposes
- (10) I believe the allowable camera shots in the chamber during a division could be varied, at no extra cost
- (13) Taking the public tour gave me greater respect for the Commons voting procedure; I think more flexible TV coverage would do the same for others
- (17) I think technical improvements could be made to live/archived web streaming on www.parliament.uk encouraging wider viewing
- (18) I believe the current ban on the use of parliamentary footage on satirical programmes is counter-productive and could, with safeguards, be lifted, perhaps generating some revenue.

Strangers Gallery

1. In oral evidence, the broadcasters expressed a desire to feature shots of specific individuals sitting in the public gallery who might be named or alluded to during debates. I draw your attention to C-SPAN's coverage of The State of the Union address, where relevant, selective shots of the President's invited guests are allowed like this, in a controlled, uncontroversial manner.
2. I think this approach would enhance parliamentary coverage; as a subtle but powerful reminder that it is the people's parliament which anyone can attend in person, also showing the chamber in a refreshingly different, more positive light than normally afforded by the "raucous" atmosphere of PMQs and prevalent (though highly misleading) shots of half-empty benches during many debates. I think it highly likely such new sequences would regularly feature as cutaways on evening news bulletins.
3. To mitigate against accusations of bias, there could be a simple agreed procedure before people can be shown. e.g. the broadcasters might informally agree desirable shots with the director at 7 Millbank. This list could be approved by the speaker. My understanding is that, for obvious security reasons, anyone sitting in the 'open' areas of the Strangers Gallery (i.e. not behind glass) must be approved by the Sergeant at Arms or her staff in advance and provide a reason for attending, so presumably there are lists of expected attendees which you (parliament) could pre-approve for TV use.
4. The committee expressed concern about interruptions and protests - my understanding is that when you're taken to the Strangers Gallery you're told in no uncertain terms you must sit still and not cause any sort of disturbance so firstly, it's

abundantly clear to anyone that they'll be thrown out (or worse) if they misbehave. Secondly, as Peter Knowles said, it would still be you who had full control of output, not the broadcasters. The director has the ability to preview the image of the gallery before putting it to air, or to decide not to do so at all if s/he thinks it is too risky. I'd add that when there have been disturbances from the public gallery in the past, they've tended not to be terribly audible on the live feed - all the microphones in the chamber are highly directional and the control room staff are pretty swift to cut the sound in the event of an incident. Finally only a small portion of the gallery would be visible.

5. I'd argue it's at least worth trialling this; perhaps for a high profile set-piece event like the Queen's Speech debate or budget - with that you'd be able to get an idea of any impact on public opinion or use in national or international coverage. Alternatively you could do more modest experiments with adjournment debates or similar.
6. **Listening shots.** I favour making these more lenient and agree with the broadcasters that if you were watching in person you'd naturally look around the chamber a lot more than present rules allow.
7. **Camera angles of front bench.** Whilst I agree with some on the committee on public priorities, I would say this. Firstly, when any other interior or exterior location is seen through the same fixed set of camera positions with the same filming 'style' for many years, as a viewer I think you become somewhat accepting of the limitations in individual shots; i.e. you don't appreciate how much better things could look if subtle adjustments were made. I'm sure if you asked the public they wouldn't say it was worth £50,000 but might appreciate the improvements it afterwards. (If that was indeed the cost of moving cameras - I think the committee may have become confused by this. Regardless, it's negligible compared to the control room upgrade.)
8. I've also noticed that when watching PMQs and ministerial statements on television, it's really easy to be distracted by whoever is sitting to the left or the right of the dispatch box, because the angle of the camera means their heads are closer to the centre of the frame than the member speaking.
9. **Camera positions during Divisions**
Firstly, I support the idea that even if not introduced permanently or as a trial, a one-off recording should be made for educational purposes. As was stated in oral evidence, during a division the actual process is taking place 'off stage'. Apart from the speaker announcing the tellers and later ordering the doors be locked, all we're allowed is a fixed wide angle view of the chamber.
10. I'd like to propose the director is given more creative freedom during this time, so they could show shots from the other end of the chamber looking towards the members' lobby (given there is a lot of traffic this way), and also be allowed to use shots from the cameras at the side of the chamber showing members filing out into either lobby through the four side doors. As the way all MPs vote is made public anyway, this wouldn't create a privacy issue.
11. I also think the broadcasters (at their own expense with their own equipment) should be permitted to show a locked-off shot of Central Lobby as part of their own coverage during a vote (i.e. not in the parliamentary feed) - it might be nice to be able to see MPs who weren't in the chamber arriving to vote following important

debates, so their constituents can see they're still involved - you won't notice them voting otherwise as they don't pass through the chamber itself before they reach either lobby. It would also add an element of drama to see the Prime Minister or senior ministers arriving. I'm unclear if broadcasters are currently allowed to do this - we occasionally see reporters doing pieces-to-camera during a division, are they permitted to broadcast the general comings and goings in Central Lobby as well? (clearly the Members' Lobby is out of bounds.)

12. The ban on chamber sound during a division no longer seems to be in place (or wasn't tonight) - I welcome this.
13. I attended the Houses of Parliament for the first time just this weekend to go on the **visitors tour** (incidentally, as it's in your remit, I'd like to commend the efficiency and friendliness of your staff and Blue Badge guides, it was informative and very good value for money. Even the security screening wasn't as bad as I expected. It's great you're running tours on Saturdays now - it was extremely busy.)
14. We were told how although the voting system is old-fashioned, MPs are keen to keep it because it's pretty infallible (no danger of pressing a wrong button), that it allows them to rub shoulders with ministers and how *even the Prime Minister* must say his name when voting, like everyone else. Prior to the tour, I'd never realised the division bells actually rang in nearby bars and restaurants, and until I read some of your recent discussions on visitor access, I wasn't aware that the police used to stop traffic for MPs to cross the road from Portcullis House to vote.
15. Why does any of this matter? Well, if you only see the speaker announcing "Division" and must then wait 15 minutes for the "Ayes" and "Noes", the process *seems* needlessly slow, people assume the only MPs voting are those already in the chamber, and the parliamentary language suggests the system is antiquated.
16. Now I have seen for myself the geography of the parliamentary estate, the 'equality' of the actual vote and opportunity for MPs to speak to one another, and the effort they have to go to race to the lobbies in time before the doors are locked, my respect of the system has risen dramatically. I think that maybe if those not traditionally interested in politics or cynical about it get to see the process from a new perspective, they might just think "Wow, they take this really seriously. Parliament really matters after all."
17. I agree with the **Director of Broadcasting** it's important to make footage more widely available. My profession is making websites and I'd like to see parliament.uk move to a platform neutral web feed (i.e. a video format - known as HTML5 - that would work on all devices, including phones and tablets.) It would encourage more people to embed your live or archived footage on their own websites. I recently wrote to the Parliamentary Recording Unit suggesting how they might add a live audio-only feed - something currently not provided by any broadcaster and which would be reliable enough for use by anyone (including MPs and staff) when out and about with a modern 3G mobile phone.
18. Finally I'd like to raise the issue of **the use of parliamentary footage on satirical or entertainment programmes**. You may remember a recent episode of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* was shown in America but not broadcast by Channel 4 (specifically More4) because it included some relatively innocuous footage of PMQs. The irony was the initial package was praising how the British Prime Minister is held

accountable to parliament on a weekly basis, but once Comedy Central became aware it had been censured in the UK, they ran a second feature essentially mocking us.

19. It's also inconsistent that a show like "This Week" (BBC1, Thursdays after Question Time) can get away with using parliamentary footage despite being (self-styled) "punchy, irreverent and satirical", because it's produced by the BBC's current affairs department.
20. As a voter and strong supporter of the creative industries (and a believer in the positive contribution political satire can make to political debate) I think footage should be permitted for use on any UK television (or radio) show *provided* very strong conditions on editing, cutaways and dubbing are attached (broadcasters shouldn't be allowed to alter the audio in any way or apply any visual effects that change the context) and they could be required to caption or verbally state the date the recording was made. In the light of your remarks on austerity, you might well decide to charge a royalty fee for any non-news use and it would seem reasonable that Ofcom should have the ability to impose a hefty fine on any broadcaster who abused the privilege or brought parliament into disrepute.

February 2012