

5 Live and Brexit

On Brexit night I spent 10pm to 11.30pm on 5 Live

Their idea of balance was to have reporters in Parliament Square (pro Brexit) balanced by the Scottish SNP Remain demonstration in Glasgow (anti Brexit) and a protest on the Irish border (anti Brexit) where no-one was around at the protest for the programme! So it was designed to be two against one as if Remain had won. It is also questionable whether you need to balance Remain and Leave now as if there were still a referendum under way, when the public have endorsed Leave again in a General election and it is now government policy. The official Labour Opposition was not out and about complaining on exit night about Brexit so there was no official party source to voice opposition to this national event.

They took pro and anti Brexit calls in turn. They failed to understand the pro Brexit callers who largely took the view that they had voted to belong to an independent democratic country and who instead were treated to detailed points about trade issues on various questionable forecasts and told they would be worse off. Although I gave them positives for Brexit and suggested they put those to the Remain callers they did not do so. I asked them to join me in discussing the advantages of Brexit which they promised to do but did not do. They seemed unhappy when I started to reel off a few of the potential wins we have once we are free.

It is most difficult to hold a sensible public debate when leading broadcast organisations cannot understand either what Leave means or understand why people wish to live in a free democratic and independent country. As I explained we can be better off once out properly, but that will depend on how we use our freedoms. I expect this government to help us be better off, but if any future UK government fails then the joy of democracy is they can be removed and replaced by a government that does know how to make us better off. This is something we were never able to do to the makers of EU policies like the ERM which did so much damage to our prosperity.

When as a young man I was on the losing side of the EEC referendum I accepted the democratic verdict. I did not object to the issue of a celebratory coin nor to the entirely pro EEC bias of the media after the result. Then the establishment regarded the policy and its endorsement as a matter for national rejoicing, not to provide an opportunity for the losing side to go on and on about why we were right all along. No-one suggested we might like a second go because the winning side had not stressed the truth about how this was something much more than a common market, when they assured us our sovereignty was not at risk. No-one asked us to explain how we felt about it all.

I have received complaints about the BBC Brexit night coverage. I expect the government to propose decriminalising non payment of the licence fee soon.