

### Addison Rules

1. A peer who is a member of a public board, whether commercial or non-commercial in character, is not by reason of such membership debarred from exercising his or her right to speak in the House of Lords, even on matters affecting the Board of which he or she is a member; and it is recognised that, in the last resort, only the Peer concerned can decide whether he or she can properly speak on a particular occasion.
  
2. The following guidance (based upon that given by the then Leader of the House Viscount Addison, after consultation and agreement between the parties) may be helpful to Peers, who are considering whether or not to take part in a particular debate.
  - i. When questions affecting a particular board or public board in general arise in Parliament the present Minister and the Government of the day generally are alone responsible to Parliament. The duty of reply rests with Ministers only, and cannot devolve upon members of public boards who may also be members of the House of Lords. There can be no question of Board members replacing, or usurping the functions of, Ministers and dealing with matters of Ministerial responsibility. In the Commons, of course, the possibility could not arise, because a Member of the House must resign his seat on accepting an appointment of this nature.

- ii. It is important that, as contemplated in the Statutes and, in the case of the BBC, by the Charter, the Boards shall be free to conduct their day to day administration without the intervention of Parliament or Ministers, except where otherwise provided. If Board members who happen also to be peers were to give the House information about the day to day operations of the Board or to answer criticisms respecting it, the House would in fact be exercising a measure of Parliamentary supervision over matters of management. It would also be difficult for the responsible Minister not to give similar information to the House of Commons.
  
- iii. There is no duty upon the board member to answer questions put to him in debate, and that no criticism should attach to any Board member who refrains from speaking in a debate. Nor should the fact that a member spoke in a particular debate be regarded in any way as precedent for him or any other member speaking in any other debate.
  
- iv. The above applies only to debates relating to public boards. Experience acquired as a member of a public board will often be relevant to general debates in which the same contributions do not arise, and the contributions of board members who are peers may be all the more valuable because of that experience.

3. The statement below, taken from the memoranda, best sums up the intentions behind Lord Addison's Rules.

"The House of Lords is a sensible body; and the latitude to speak or refrain from speaking, inherent in a peer, is not likely to cause embarrassment. Indeed, any attempt to lay down a hard and fast rule would be more likely to cause embarrassment".