One of the areas that needs sorting out is the role of the House of Lords and its Select Committees in Financial and Taxation matters. There are quite rightly restrictions on our powers to amend or delay legislation in this area and I have no wish to change this. However as I understand the position is that the House of Lords can freely debate these matters but the sub-committee of the Economic Affairs Select Committee has a restriction imposed by the House of Lords itself so it cannot discuss rates of taxation etc. This as I understand was part of a deal which Gordon Brown insisted on before he would allow the Treasury to cooperate with the Select Committee. It is a nonsense and in practice the sub-committee can usually find ways of circumventing it to say what it wants. Some year ago I gave evidence on this to a Joint Committee of both Houses chaired by Jack Cunningham which your office could look up for you to read. The restriction should be amended.

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