

If the UK wants good tax legislation than parliament ha...

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Another [reflection from yesterday's discussion at the House of Lords](#).

There was another area of surprising unanimity between the CIOT and me. The CIOT argued that there was a serious problem with the opposition, back bench MPs and the House of Lords having to scrabble around amongst a few willing advisers (me included) to secure opinion on tax policy and law.

Ian Menzies-Conacher of the CIOT sang the praises of the US Senate system where its tax committee have a permanent staff with considerable experience to advise on a bipartisan basis.

I similarly sang the praises of the Senate Committee on Investigations which has done great work on the US tax gap and tax haven abuse.

I think it was astonishing, but welcome, that we both came to the table with the same argument.

And we also agreed that since the UK Treasury took control of tax policy there has been a loss of clarity in UK tax thinking. It's a simple fact that economists have almost no clue about tax. You only have to look at the rubbish that the ESRC and others pay for and which comes from the Oxford Centre for Business Taxation to realise just how ill informed most neoliberal economists are on any issue relating to tax (largely because they are pre-conditioned to loath it, and so have no objectivity on the subject). And it is this thinking that has had the upper hand in recent years in the UK Treasury.

It's time for HMRC to take back control of UK tax policy.

It's time too (as I said) that the government begins to say that tax is a really good thing, which it believes in, and which it thinks everyone should pay for the benefits it brings to all in society.

And that means that it should be willing to invest in the process of getting the best tax law we can have. But right now, regrettably, and as I think all present agreed, that isn't

happening.