

Simon Hoggart on Starbucks, Google and Amazon being sho.

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I liked Simon Hoggart's commentary on yesterday's hearing of Starbucks, Google and Amazon before the Parliamentary Accounts Committee. [He said](#):

It was one of the great committee disasters, like watching the Titanic, the Bismarck and the R101 all go down in the same afternoon. The public accounts committee had summoned executives from three huge multinationals who do millions of pounds of business in Britain but pay peanuts in tax.

There have been plenty of terrible, grisly, embarrassing, watch-between-your-fingers moments recently as witnesses are shredded on the old barbed-wire sessions — the Murdochs, Bob Diamond of Barclays, that bloke with the mullet from G4S, and most recently George Entwistle. This made them all look like a chat on the sofa with Richard and Judy.

I agreed: whilst there I described it as watching a train crash in slow motion.

But what is more important is this:

Once the report influenced by Monday's session is produced, it will be difficult for the government to do nothing. These buffoonish executives might have cost their companies billions — something few of us can claim.

I rather hope he's true. Having had some influence in getting all three companies into the situation where they had to answer questions on tax I had high hopes, and some trepidation about yesterday. The PAC did not let anyone down yesterday. They quite correctly highlighted the fiction in these companies' tax arrangements. And for that we should be grateful to them.