

Funding the Future

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Anyone can become an MP. No training is required, and then they set the rules for everyone else. That's absurd. All prospective parliamentarians and councillors should have to take an exam to prove their competence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhUcUt15eB8&si=IfY-ygDY56S7OO3r>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=99cth-17ddab2-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&button-skin=c73a3a

And this is the transcript:

How do we get competent politicians?

What we all know is that we haven't got them. What we need is a way to guarantee that we get them.

My idea is that we should require that politicians take an exam before they're even allowed to stand for Parliament.

After all, you can't drive a car without a licence.

You can't do a great many other things in this country without having proved your competence to do so. I required a piece of paper to prove that I was qualified to be a

practising accountant. A doctor requires a qualification, a lawyer does, a teacher does, and on and on. But when it comes to politics, we don't require any proof of competence whatsoever.

The people who are actually setting the rules for this country don't need to prove they know how to do so. And that is absurd.

Just imagine what the job of a politician is for a moment. Most of the time, they're looking at law. And yet, they need no training in what the law is.

Most of the time, they're engaged in activities in the House of Commons, but nobody trains them in what those processes are before they get there.

They arrive and learn on the job.

Most of them have no idea about economics at all, even though the biggest political concern of most people in the UK is about economics. They don't even know what money is, where it comes from, how the government creates it, how it expends it, and why tax exists to help control the economy as a whole and not to fund government spending.

When it comes to interest rates, which are one of the big concerns of most households in the country, they know they've abandoned responsibility for this to the Bank of England and therefore don't worry themselves about what it is they should know.

And, as for inflation, most of them are deeply ignorant as to its causes and why it invariably passes if, as was the case in the recent bout of inflation, it was created by a source outside the UK.

These people are then deeply unable to appraise the problems that this country faces because they have no training in them.

They do not know how to appraise the problems, work out solutions, and enact them. As a vote of confidence goes, those last statements are pretty staggering. What they show is that we have people who are completely unfit to govern us, sitting in the House of Commons.

And that's because we have not bothered to provide them with training.

Yes, I know that when they get to the House of Commons, they do get training on how to fill in their expenses form. And they are required to undertake some training on ethics in the House of Commons. Ethics including things like, wear a tie, and don't say that somebody is lying, even though they obviously are.

But in the core subjects I've just referred to, there is no training at all. And my suggestion is that rather than require that people put up a deposit when they wish to

stand for Parliament, which they have to at present and which they lose if they do not collect 5 per cent of the votes in a general election, they are instead required to take an exam to prove their competence to be a member of that Parliament.

We might even do the same, although somewhat less rigorously, of those who want to stand for councils, particularly large councils like county councils, because, again, the people who serve on those institutions need to know how they work. And they are, just as are politicians in parliament, responsible for the creation of law and for the expenditure of very large sums of money, which most of them will have little understanding of.

Why couldn't we do that? Why wouldn't we want to require that people take a training course?

The training course could be onerous. Why not? It should be. They want to become serious figures in our public life. If it takes a year for them to learn the material, and they have to sit an exam, which they must pass with an adequate mark, to be able to stand as a candidate, is that a problem?

I personally don't think so. I think that's the precondition of becoming an MP or a councillor. It would also stop the curse of people being dropped in by political parties late in the day on local constituencies who don't really want them to be their MPs because those people would not have been prepared for this role. To be a politician in Parliament you need to have done your groundwork and preparation long before you ever get there.

Don't we just know that from the failure of Labour? Now, it has a vast majority in the House of Commons but very clearly very little competence to govern.

This idea is a simple and straightforward one. It's incredibly low cost. It would undoubtedly improve the quality of public life in this country. It would reduce the number of mistakes that politicians make and the stupid comments that they pass through the media. And we would all be better off as a result.

So, come on Parliament, change the rules, put this idea into operation, require that new members of Parliament should in the future have to pass an exam to be able to stand for election and that those who are already there should prove their competence through undertaking dedicated training to ensure that they know the same things that new candidates should.

Unless Parliament is willing to do that, it really doesn't believe in its own importance or the requirement that it be competent to undertake its tasks. And unless it does that, it's failing us all.