

From: LORD SUDELEY FSA

To the Daily Telegraph.

Re: Heredity and the House of Lords.

Sir,

Much has appeared in the press lately about the House of Lords in relation to peers' expenses, where your leader of 22 December remarks the Lords lacks the legitimacy bestowed upon the Commons by its electoral mandate. Why so? Because the House of Lords is still in small part hereditary, and for the most part an appointed Upper Chamber.

Nobody wants an appointed House of Lords, appointed that is to say by the Executive, since this is to undermine the historical role of the House of Lords as a branch of the Legislature to curb the power of the Executive.

David Cameron needs to be steered away from his present solution of an elected Chamber. John Major wisely anticipated an elected Upper Chamber would result in gridlock, because the Commons is too jealous of its own authority.

At the time of the eviction of most of the hereditaries in 1999 an Opinion Poll showed most of the electorate did not want any change in the composition of the Lords without knowing of something better in its place. Nothing of the kind has been provided. The only answer is to restore the hereditaries. It should become the wish of the Shadow Cabinet there should be a debate in the Lords for that end.

Sudeley.

Postscript: Service by the Hereditary Peers in the House of Lords used to be compared to Fagging at Eton, both kinds of service were of the feudal kind, totally loyal, and unpaid.

I notice now the venality of the new peers, fiddling their expenses and eager to charge money to the pressure groups they represent. I have yet to hear of any hereditary peer still in the House of Lords who has fiddleed their expenses the way the elected MPs in the House of Commons and the Life Peers do.