

THE DECLINE IN PRESS REPORTING OF PARLIAMENT

JACK STRAW MP

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A full set of copies of all newspapers surveyed for this study is available from Jack Straw's office, price £10. The set is very bulky. The quality of some of the copies (from microfiche) is poor.

## THE DECLINE IN THE PRESS REPORTING OF PARLIAMENT

### PREFACE

A few months ago I was turning out some old files in my room in the Commons when I came across a collection of newspaper cuttings from my first year in the House - 1979. I was reminded by these of the extensive coverage then given to Parliamentary debates, and of the relative frequency with which the contributions of back-benchers to debate were carried in the press gallery reports of the broadsheet newspapers. There was a serious effort then made to convey the nature of the argument across the floor of the House (and within each side of it).

I contrasted this coverage with the treatment of Parliamentary debates today. Even the Maastricht debates, of very high quality, and with an uncertain outcome, were usually ignored. I therefore decided to do some detailed research into the press reporting of Parliament.

I asked Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, a politics student at the University of Sheffield, who was working in my office as an intern over the summer, to conduct a systematic study of how the press had reported Parliament over the last fifty years. He spent many days at the British Library Newspaper Collection, at Colindale. He spent many more days painstakingly cross-checking Hansards for each of the days selected, with facsimiles of the press reports. He then analysed and measured the output. I am extremely grateful to him, and to the Reference Section of the Commons Library, who provided some of the newspapers on which Benjamin worked.

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SUMMARY

1. This study measured the amount of press reporting of Parliament, on designated "Parliament" or "Politics" pages, on three set days early in February, July, and December, in 1933, in 1953, 1963, 1973, 1983, 1988, and 1992, in *The Times*, and *The Guardian* (and its predecessor *The Manchester Guardian*), and on one day in each of those years for *The Daily Telegraph*, and the *Daily Mirror*. (As the *Mirror* has never had a separate Parliamentary page, all reports of debates in this paper were measured, regardless of where they appeared.)
2. The study indicates that in the past five years, systematic daily reporting of Parliamentary debates in the broadsheet press has been significantly reduced, in some cases to a quarter of what it was before. (Tables 1 and 2, Figures 1 - 4).
3. Between 1933, and 1988, coverage of Parliamentary debates took between 400 and 800 lines in *The Times*, and between 300 and 700 lines in *The Guardian*. By 1992 coverage had declined to fewer than 100 lines, in both papers.
4. The decline in coverage in *The Daily Telegraph* was less marked; even so, it has about halved compared with 1988 and earlier years. There has been no discernible long-term decline in reporting of Parliament in *The Daily Mirror*, though its quantity was always much less.
5. This serious decline in the coverage of Parliamentary debate is bound to have an adverse effect on the public's understanding of their system of democratic government.
6. Further research is needed to ascertain the kind of information about Parliamentary debates which readers of broadsheet papers want, and which the wider public interest requires.

PRESS REPORTING OF PARLIAMENT

THE CASE FOR REPORTING PARLIAMENT

The only alternative to politics is violence.

All societies face conflict as individuals, their families, and their communities compete for resources which by their nature are scarce. Societies achieve relative peace and harmony not by denying their potential for conflict, but by resolving conflict through the political process.

Why argument matters

At the heart of that process is argument. The success of argument arises not from the volume with which a case is made, but from its inherent strength, from being tested by questioning, by probing, especially from those whose starting point is the opposite point of view. Nations only gradually acquire the ability to argue. Without it, effective democracy is impossible.

The Croatian journalist, Slaventa Drakulic, makes this case with great poignancy in her book "Balkan Express".

"Recently", she wrote "an American friend asked me how it happened that the most liberal and best-off communist country [Yugoslavia] was the one that now had the war ... The answer is so simple that I'm almost ashamed of it. We traded our freedom for Italian shoes ... We didn't build a political underground of people with liberal, democratic values ready to take over the government; not because it was impossible, but on the contrary, because the repression was not hard enough to produce the need for it" [Hutchinson, 1993, pp 135-6]. Civil war and slaughter have been the only method for resolving the conflicts over scarce resources, of land, access, and wealth, for which the various nations in the former Yugoslavia have ever received much training.

The principal job of elected politicians is to make the argument on behalf of their constituents, and their parties, and to do so in the forum which gives them their legitimacy (and the government its authority) - namely Parliament.

Process, not spectacle

But if people are to have confidence in the political system, then they must be able to see it working, as a process, and not as a spectacle. If they have time, and cable television, they will be able to watch Parliamentary debate on television. But most people have neither the time, nor cable tv. They need to rely upon journalists to distill, and then report, the essence of the argument which is made.

For centuries it was lawful only to report the decisions of Parliament, not its debate. Systematic reporting of Parliamentary debate, by pioneers like Samuel Johnson, arose because of a public demand to know what was going on, and above all, what the argument was which had led to particular decisions being made. All governments tell people what to do. It is only in functioning democracies that people are able to demand, through their representatives, an answer to the question "why?".

From the beginning of modern newspapers, until the late nineteen-eighties, the broadsheet press devoted substantial space and attention to the straightforward reporting of the Parliamentary process. Skilled journalists sat in the Press Gallery of the Commons, distilling the argument, highlighting strong, and weak elements of the case, noting the concessions made by one side to the argument of the other.

#### Hansard for two Mars Bars

The result was that on any day members of the public could find in the newspapers a good summary of Parliament's proceedings, of great issues, large and small. Those that wanted to know verbatim what had happened could ask in their public library for Hansard. Or, for the price of a couple of Mars Bars, they could order themselves a personal copy. Hansard, for example, cost just 12p in 1976, and only 40p in 1979. Today it costs £7.50 - a tenfold real terms rise in 20 years.

As this research study shows the quantity of reporting declined a little between 1933 and 1988, and its style altered. But the fundamental nature and content of the reporting remained the same. The purpose was to report what happened in the Chamber of the Commons.

In the last five years, however, the reporting of Parliament has undergone a greater change than at any time in the last 60 years, and probably the last century. The systematic reporting of debate has all but been abandoned. Newspapers like *The Times* and *The Guardian*, which claim most to want to uphold, and strengthen, the Parliamentary process, have been among the worst offenders. Their coverage has been cut to a quarter of what it was even in the very recent past.

#### The Guardian

On 6 December 1988, for example, *The Guardian* devoted a full page (without advertising) to "The Day in Politics", 364 column lines. Four separate debates or statements were covered (on jobs, Northern Ireland, training, health) in detail. "The day in brief" contained information on four other sets of proceedings. There was a sketch, a profile and three other stories (on pacts, secrecy, and abortion).

On 1 July 1992, by contrast, the space available was cut by half (by a BT advertisement). Of that which remained, just 94 lines (on a generous interpretation) was devoted to report the proceedings of Parliament. The rest of the space was used for Ian Aitken's "Points of Order" column, and a story about the Lords and Maastricht.

#### The Times

There is a similar, striking contrast, with *The Times*. This paper used to sell copies not least for the breadth and detail of its reporting of Parliamentary debates, and for the fact that it was a newspaper of the record.

Even five years ago it devoted 399 column lines to Parliamentary proceedings in its 5 July 1988 edition, 364 column lines in its edition of 5 December 1988. On both days readers would have received substantial information about what went on, as well as a flavour of the debates.

Though there were four substantive stories in *The Times* for 1 July 1992, none reported what had actually happened in the Commons itself. Just 60 column lines, of three-quarters of a "Politics & Government" page, were devoted to reporting debate in the edition of 1 December 1992.

#### Reasons for the decline

The decline in press reporting of Parliament would appear to have a number of linked causes. These include:

- \* the televising of Parliament (from 1989). This, I understand, led some newspaper executives to assert that there was no need to report what was anyway available on television. But there is a double paradox here. First, the newspapers continue to give prominence to exactly the same small parts of Parliamentary proceedings, like Prime Minister's Questions and major statements, which also form the basis of radio and TV reports of Parliament. Secondly, this very concentration by radio and TV on Prime Minister's Questions seems to have reinforced a view among some editors and executives that Parliament was simply a slanging and shouting match which therefore deserved even less coverage than it had previously received. There has been some increase in coverage by regional programmes of Parliamentary debates, and by off peak national programmes like "Westminster Live". This is welcome, but neither is a substitute for proper written reports of debate;
- \* a delayed reaction to the very large majorities of the "Thatcher years". This meant that whatever the quality of the debate and the weight of the argument, the government was always assured of a majority. It is ironic that this reaction to the Thatcher years has occurred so belatedly when the government's majority has been cut to 17. What now happens in the Chamber is bound to have a more significant effect on politics than at any time since 1979;
- \* a generation change among political editors of the broadsheet papers. Coincidentally, many senior political editors, brought up on Gallery reporting, retired or moved on in the mid '80s. The new approach of their replacements was reinforced by the view, led by the then new *Independent*, that straight Gallery reporting was boring, and should in part be replaced by "colour" and "Lobby" pieces;
- \* a consequential change in the behaviour of MPs. They have resorted more and more to the press release in the near absence of any coverage of Chamber speeches which they may make.

The decline in press reporting, though it may have been justified at the time by market considerations, has not coincided with any increase in circulations of the papers concerned. All the papers happened to have higher circulations when they were reporting Parliament more fully, though it is not suggested that there is any causal link between these factors. (see Table 4).

#### Does it matter?

The last question is whether this decline in Parliamentary reporting matters. I believe that it does, in two important respects.



## RESEARCH METHOD

1. This study measured the amount of press reporting of Parliament, on designated "Parliament" or "Politics" pages, on three set days early in February, July, and December, in 1933, in 1953, 1963, 1973, 1983, 1988, and 1992, in *The Times*, and *The Guardian* (and its predecessor *The Manchester Guardian*), and on one day in each of those years for *The Daily Telegraph*, and the *Daily Mirror*. (As the *Mirror* has never had a separate Parliamentary page, all reports of debates in this paper were measured, regardless of where they appeared).
2. The days were: Thursday, 2 February, Wednesday 5 July, Tuesday 5 December, 1933; Tuesday 1 December, Thursday 5 February, Wednesday 1 July 1953; Thursday 7 February, Wednesday 3 July, Tuesday 3 December 1963; Thursday 1 February, Wednesday 4 July, Tuesday 4 December 1973; Thursday 2 February, Wednesday 6 July, Tuesday 6 December 1983; Thursday 4 February, Wednesday 7 July, Tuesday 6 December 1988; Thursday 6 February, Tuesday 1 December 1992.
3. Each of the dates used were the first Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday in the month. Due to time, and cost constraints, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Daily Mirror* were examined on one day in each of the years chosen.
4. A systematic approach was taken when viewing the newspapers. The designated Parliamentary pages were photocopied. Other pages of the papers were scanned for political stories (major ones of which were also copied).
5. The measure used was column lines, which gives a more accurate approximation to words used, than column inches or centimetres.
6. In each case the items reported were compared with the subject of debates and questions in the House of Commons for the same day (ie the day before publication), as indicated on the title page of Commons Hansard for that day. The comparisons are shown in Table 1.
7. Other information on newspaper circulation, and the price of Hansard was obtained from published sources.
8. The limitations of a "snap-shot" study of this kind are readily acknowledged. Its finding can only be preliminary, and more research is required. But the study's findings do give a clear idea of the trend in reporting, and are well corroborated by other evidence.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

1. The study indicates that in the past five years, systematic daily reporting of Parliamentary debates in the broadsheet press has been significantly reduced, in some cases to a quarter of what it was before. (Tables 1 and 2, Figures 1 - 4).
2. Between 1933, and 1988, coverage of Parliamentary debates took between 400 and 800 lines in *The Times*, and between 300 and 700 lines in *The Guardian*. By 1992 coverage had declined to fewer than 100 lines, in both papers.



3. The decline in coverage in *The Daily Telegraph* was less marked; even so, it has about halved compared with 1988 and earlier years. There has been no discernible long-term decline in reporting of Parliament in *The Daily Mirror*, though its quantity was always much less.
4. The proportion of debates reported has halved. Between 1933 and 1988, a quarter to a third of the subjects debated in Parliament on the dates specified were reported in the press. In 1992 this proportion had fallen to 16%, or about one subject in seven. (Table 3).
5. Major stories involving Parliament have, of course, always been reported on the front pages, or main home news pages of newspapers, as well as on designated "Parliament", or "Politics" pages. This study sought specifically to measure only coverage on designated pages. But coverage on other pages was looked at. It does not seem to have changed that much. It continues to vary greatly according to the strength of the story, and of other news of the day. There is, however, no evidence that the decline in Parliamentary coverage on designated pages identified by the study has been off-set by an increase in coverage on other pages.
6. The nature of press reporting of Parliament has changed, alongside the decline in its quantity. More space is now given to "Lobby" stories, mainly about the internal politics of the parties, than to debate in the Chamber. But space devoted overall to Parliament, to both debate and "Lobby" stories has declined.
7. The change in reporting of Parliament does not appear to have affected coverage of Ministers, or of Shadow Cabinet, or other senior party spokespeople. It has unquestionably affected coverage and attention given to backbench MPs, and junior spokespeople.
8. The decline in press reporting, though it may have been justified at the time by market considerations, has not coincided with any increase in circulations of the papers concerned. All the papers happened to have higher circulations when they were reporting Parliament more fully, though it is not suggested that there is any casual link between these factors. (see Table 4).
9. As newspapers have reported less and less of the work of the Commons, so the price of Hansard has been forced up dramatically as a consequence of government policy. The real price of Hansard has doubled since 1987, and has increased, in real terms, by ten times since 1970. Then it cost 12p (2s 3d). Today, it costs £7.50. (see Table 5, and Figure 5).
10. In consequence, Parliamentary debate has become less and less and accessible to the public.
11. The serious decline in the coverage of Parliamentary debates is bound to have an adverse effect on the public's understanding of their system of democratic government.
12. It is suggested that newspaper editors, and research bodies, may wish to sponsor more detailed study than has been possible in this research project to ascertain the kind of information about Parliamentary debates which the readers of broadsheet papers want, and which the wider public interest requires.

TABLE ONE

PRESS REPORTING OF PARLIAMENT  
Coverage in Parliamentary pages, by column lines

Date	Subject, by Hansard titles	Gua	Tim	Tel	Mir
1 February 1933	RECESS				
4 July 1933	British Navy	-	-	X	-
	Scotland	-	-	X	-
	Board of Trade	683	868	X	17
	Total	683	868	X	17
4 December 1933	India	-	7	X	-
	Trade + Commerce	-	-	X	-
	Education	-	-	X	-
	Unemployment	-	-	X	-
	Irish Free State	654	824	X	-
	Special Duties	-	92	X	-
	Import Duties	-	15	X	-
	Travellers'	-	-	X	-
Total	654	938	X	-	
4 February 1953	Civil Aviation	-	-	-	-
	Icelandic Fishing	-	-	-	-
	Disputa	-	-	-	-
	G.B. Subjects	-	19	18	-
	Eastern Europe	-	-	-	-
	United Nations	-	-	16	-
	Germany	-	-	-	-
	Egypt	-	-	-	-
	Korea	33	29	30	-
	ECSC	-	30	17	-
	Mid East Defence	-	-	-	-
	Euro Defence Comm	-	11	-	-
	London Diplomatic	-	-	-	-
	Correspondance	-	-	-	-
	Tangier	-	27	38	-
	SBC Overseas	-	-	-	-
	Services	-	-	-	-
	G.B. Secret Serv.	-	-	-	-
	West Euro Defence	-	-	22	-
	Sudan	-	-	-	-
	Anglo-Argentine	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Food	-	-	-	-	
Private Building	-	-	4	-	
East Coast Flood	-	-	25	-	
Storm Damage	326	292	255	-	
Transport Bill	197	216	73	-	

TABLE ONE - Page two

		Qua	Tim	Tel	Mir
	Electrification in South West Total	- 466	- 648	- 498	- -
30 June 1953	Scotland	-	73	X	-
	Min. of Pensions	-	-	X	-
	British Army	-	-	X	-
	Trade + Commerce	40	-	X	-
	National Finance	-	-	X	-
	Cabinet	-	-	X	-
	Korea	-	-	X	-
	Housing	-	-	X	-
	Local Govt.	12	36	X	-
	Trooping the Col.	-	65	X	-
	Fishing Boats	-	-	X	-
	Catering Wages	-	-	X	-
	Egypt	9	-	X	-
	Hard + Ply Wood	-	-	X	-
	Minutes of Evid.	-	-	X	-
	New Towns	-	-	X	-
	Min. of Pensions	130	172	X	-
	Coastal Flooding	256	207	X	-
	Euro Migration	-	2	X	-
	Total	437	568	X	-
30 November 1953	Coal	-	-	X	-
	Gas + Electricity	-	40	X	-
	Copper Supplies	-	-	X	-
	Legal Aid Costs	-	-	X	-
	Germany	-	-	X	-
	United Nations	-	-	X	-
	Chinese in Burma	-	-	X	-
	Euro Migration	-	-	X	-
	Euro Defence Comm	-	-	X	-
	Sudan	-	40	X	-
	Four-Power Conference	-	32	X	-
	Min. of Food	-	25	X	-
	P.M. Q's	-	-	X	-
	Commons Catering	-	-	X	-
	Atomic Energy	-	-	X	-
	Pensions + Nat Insurance	-	-	X	-
	Cattle Raising	-	-	X	-
	Met Police	-	-	X	-
	Resignations	-	-	X	-
	G.B. Troops Kenya	-	-	X	-
	Court-Martial	115	175	X	-
	Building Licences	-	105	X	-
	Kabaka of Buganda	-	200	X	-
	Housing Repairs + Rents	449	359	X	-
	East-West Trade	99	42	X	-
	Total	663	1018	X	-

TABLE DME - Page three

		Gns	Tbn	Tal	Mir
6 February 1963	Royal Navy	52	208	146	-
	British Army	42	79	-	-
	Redundant Workers Severance Pay	-	23	26	-
	Nat. Insurance	48	177	146	-
	Loc. Govt. Finan.	-	-	-	-
	Prisons	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>338</b>	-
2 July 1963	Trade + Commerce	-	-	X	-
	Min. of Security	53	178	X	-
	Min. of Tourism	-	-	X	-
	Continental Time	16	-	X	-
	Security	-	-	X	-
	Nuclear Energy	-	-	X	-
	President Kennedy	25	-	X	-
	Kenya	-	-	X	-
	Burmah Oil Co.	64	136	X	40
	Stamant-Philby	170	-	X	-
	The Yemen	19	-	X	-
	Complaint of Priv	-	30	X	-
	Foreign Affairs	431	699	X	-
College Grants	-	-	X	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>1043</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>40</b>	
1 December 1963	Pensions + Mat In	-	12	X	-
	Hospitals	-	-	X	-
	Adjournment Deb.	-	-	X	-
	Air Corp. Bill	481	700	X	-
	Housing	-	-	X	-
	Radioactive Sub.	-	-	X	-
Civil Defence	-	-	X	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>X</b>	-	
31 January 1973	Scotland	-	-	38	-
	Life Peers	96	73	68	-
	Overseas Aid	90	110	116	-
	DHSS (Staff)	44	126	139	-
	Devolict Land	-	-	-	-
	National Insuran.	-	126	73	-
	Rate Supp. Grant	21	65	38	-
	Army (Pay)	-	-	-	-
	Museums (Grants)	-	-	-	-
	Police	-	-	-	-
	Yorks + Humber	-	-	-	-
Scotland (Oil)	-	-	-	-	
Railway Policy	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>448</b>	-	

TABLE ONE - Page four

		Qua	Tim	Tel	W/F
3 July 1973	Defence	-	175	X	-
	Counter-Inflation	-	89	X	-
	Battered Wives	-	-	X	-
	Ministerial	-	-	X	-
	Broadcast	93	137	X	-
	Food Prices	-	25	X	-
	Immigration Act	-	29	X	81
	Northern Ireland	248	141	X	-
	EEC Medical	-	-	X	-
Total	341	566	X	81	
3 December 1973	Wales	-	-	X	-
	Trade + Industry	94	282	X	-
	Juries	-	-	X	-
	London + County	-	-	X	-
	Securities Ltd	399	413	X	-
	Public Accounts	119	159	X	-
	International	-	-	X	-
	Sugar Organis. Castlemartin	-	-	X	-
Total	592	1054	X	-	
2 February 1983	Scotland	32	-	-	-
	Tam Dalyell	-	-	-	-
	P.M.Q's	-	-	51	-
	Prison Education	-	37	55	-
	Y.F.S.	119	397	121	-
	Trade	-	159	42	-
	Opencast Mining	-	-	-	-
Total	151	593	289	-	
5 July 1983	Educ & Science	90	200	X	-
	P.M.Q's	98	242	X	-
	Housing Control	231	226	X	35
	Betting & Gaming	-	-	X	-
	Dependent Territ.	-	-	X	-
	Total	419	668	X	35
5 December 1983	Transport	36	121	X	-
	Attorney General	39	57	X	-
	Overseas Dev.	-	92	X	-
	The Lebanon	245	294	X	-
	Greenham Common	-	7	X	49
	Scotland Bill	72	-	X	7
	Supple'tary Ban.	-	-	X	-
	Consumer Credit	-	-	X	-
	Forestry	-	-	X	-
	Total	392	571	X	56

TABLE ONE - Page five

		Gu	Fin	Del	Mir
1 February 1988	Foreign & Common.	158	-	-	-
	Unific. Church	98	132	121	-
	Crown Suppliers	92	189	43	-
	Anglo-Irish Hala.	-	-	-	-
	NHS Ind. Action	-	-	52	-
	Transplant & Not.	-	-	-	149
	Licensing Bill	-	-	-	-
	Welsh Dev	-	-	114	-
	International Dev	-	-	-	-
	Dartmoor Park	-	-	-	-
Total	348	331	330	149	
5 July 1988	Employment	69	10	X	-
	P.M. Q's	114	208	X	-
	Belfast C. C.	-	-	X	-
	Points of Order	-	-	X	-
	M.R.S.	216	340	X	-
	Education	-	-	X	-
	Northern Ireland	-	-	X	-
	Barlow Clowes	-	-	X	-
Total	399	438	X	-	
5 December 1988	Wales	33	32	X	-
	The Arts	15	81	X	-
	Civil Service	-	-	X	-
	Salmonella & Egg	120	172	X	75
	Employment	92	66	X	-
	N. Ireland Bill	105	187	X	26
	Euro. Community	-	-	X	-
	Young Persons	-	-	X	-
Total	364	458	X	101	
5 February 1992	Foreign & Common.	-	83	84	-
	Points of Order	-	-	-	-
	Criminal Instr.	-	-	48	-
	Scotland Bill	-	-	-	-
	Social Security	-	16	-	-
	Fees & Hartlepool	-	-	-	-
Total	-	99	132	-	
30 June 1992	Defence	-	-	X	-
	P.M.Q's	76	-	X	67
	Tattooing	-	-	X	-
	Boundary Comm.	-	-	X	-
	Child Support	18	-	X	-
	Council Tax Sen.	-	-	X	-
	Depart. Sel. Com.	-	-	X	-
	Water Petition	-	-	X	-
Total	94	-	X	67	



TABLE ONE - Page six

		Qua	Tim	Isl	Mir
30 November 1993	Social Security	20	-	X	-
	Church Comm.	60	20	X	-
	Lord Chancellor	-	-	X	-
	Market Power	-	-	X	-
	Bosnian Refugees	-	-	X	-
	Soc. Sec. Bill	-	40	X	-
	Rail Privatisa.	-	-	X	-
	Macedonia	-	-	X	-
Total	80	60	X	-	

X indicates not researched  
 - indicates not reported



TABLE TWO (Summary of Table One)

PRESS REPORTING OF PARLIAMENTARY Coverage in Parliamentary pages, by column lines					
Date	Subject by Hansard titles	Gua	Tim	Tel	Mir
1 February 1933	RECESS				
4 July 1933	Total	583	368	X	37
4 December 1933	Total	684	928	X	-
4 February 1953	Total	466	646	498	-
26 June 1953	Total	437	369	X	-
20 November 1953	Total	663	1018	X	-
6 February 1963	Total	143	483	335	-
2 July 1963	Total	768	1043	X	40
2 December 1963	Total	481	732	X	-
11 January 1973	Total	293	500	446	-
3 July 1973	Total	341	566	X	81
3 December 1973	Total	502	1054	X	-
2 February 1983	Total	131	593	268	-
5 July 1983	Total	419	668	X	38
5 December 1983	Total	388	571	X	56
3 February 1988	Total	346	321	330	149

TABLE TWO - Page two

		Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
5 July 1988	Total	399	489	x	-
5 December 1988	Total	364	488	x	101
5 February 1992	Total	-	98	132	-
30 June 1992	Total	94	-	x	67
30 November 1992	Total	60	60	x	-

x indicates not researched  
 - indicates not reported

TABLE THREE

Table of Percentage of Reported Stories to Titles in Hansard	
1933	37%
1953	30%
1963	30%
1973	32%
1983	36%
1988	33%
1992	16%

TABLE FOUR

Average Annual Sales of Newspapers Surveyed				
1930*	Times	Guardian	Telegraph	Mirror
1953	126	na	175	1,072
1963	223	137	na	4,572
1973	254	264	1,305	4,737
1983	345	346	1,420	4,292
1988	535	441	1,256	3,335
1992	443	454	1,133	3,119
	384	414	1,051	2,680

\* Figures for 1933 not available

TABLE FIVE

Price of Hansard since 1970		
Year	Actual Price in 1992	Price in 1970 Terms
1970	2s 3d	2s 3d
1974	20p	14p
1979	40p	14p
1983	£1.00	23p
1987	£3.95	53p
1992	£7.50	£1.04

Mr Maples answer to Mr Straw's written question, to be found in Hansard, 13 February 1992, page 524, column 7.

"For many years the prices of parliamentary debates were heavily subsidised. In 1983, when the annual subsidy stood at £6 million, the government decided progressively to reduce the level of subsidy required, by a combination of price increases and improved methods of production. I was able to announce last November that the latest price increases, together with plans to enable the reports of proceedings to be "machine read" by the HMSO presses should permit the final elimination of the revenue subsidy - 1 November 1991, Official Report, column 3"

FIGURE ONE

\* Not available  
\* Bill

Coverage of Parliament in the Guardian  
Lines

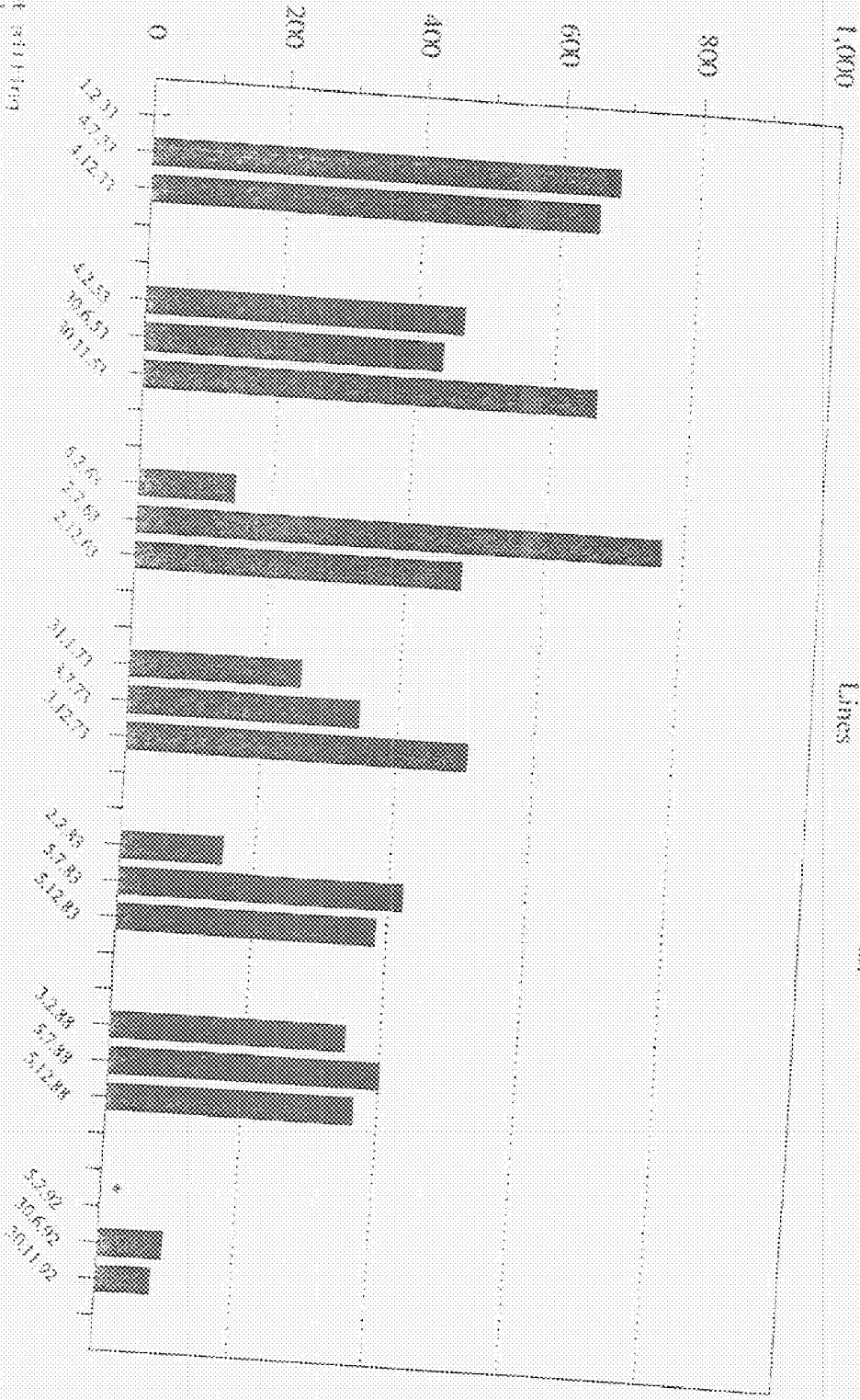
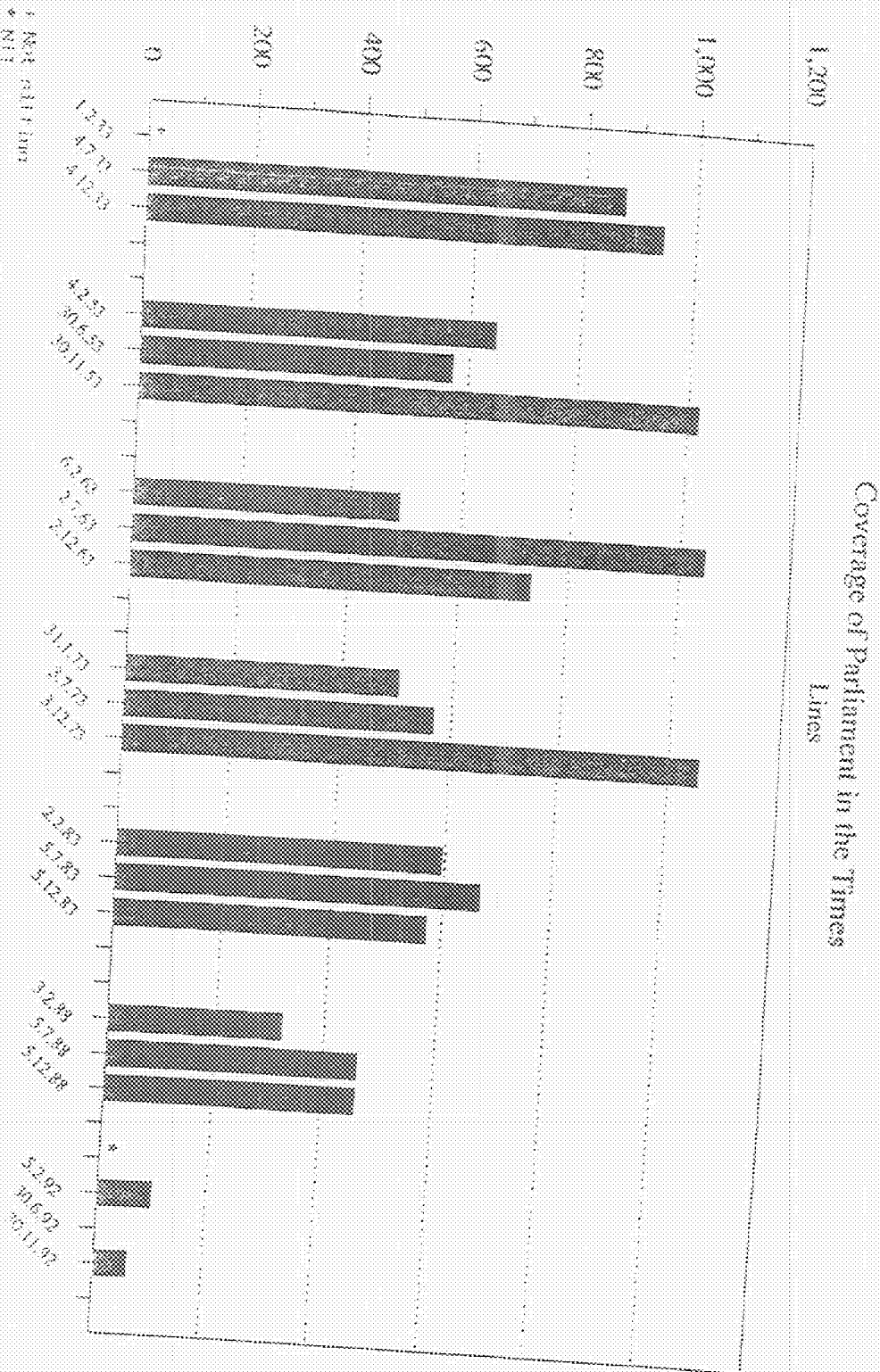


FIGURE TWO



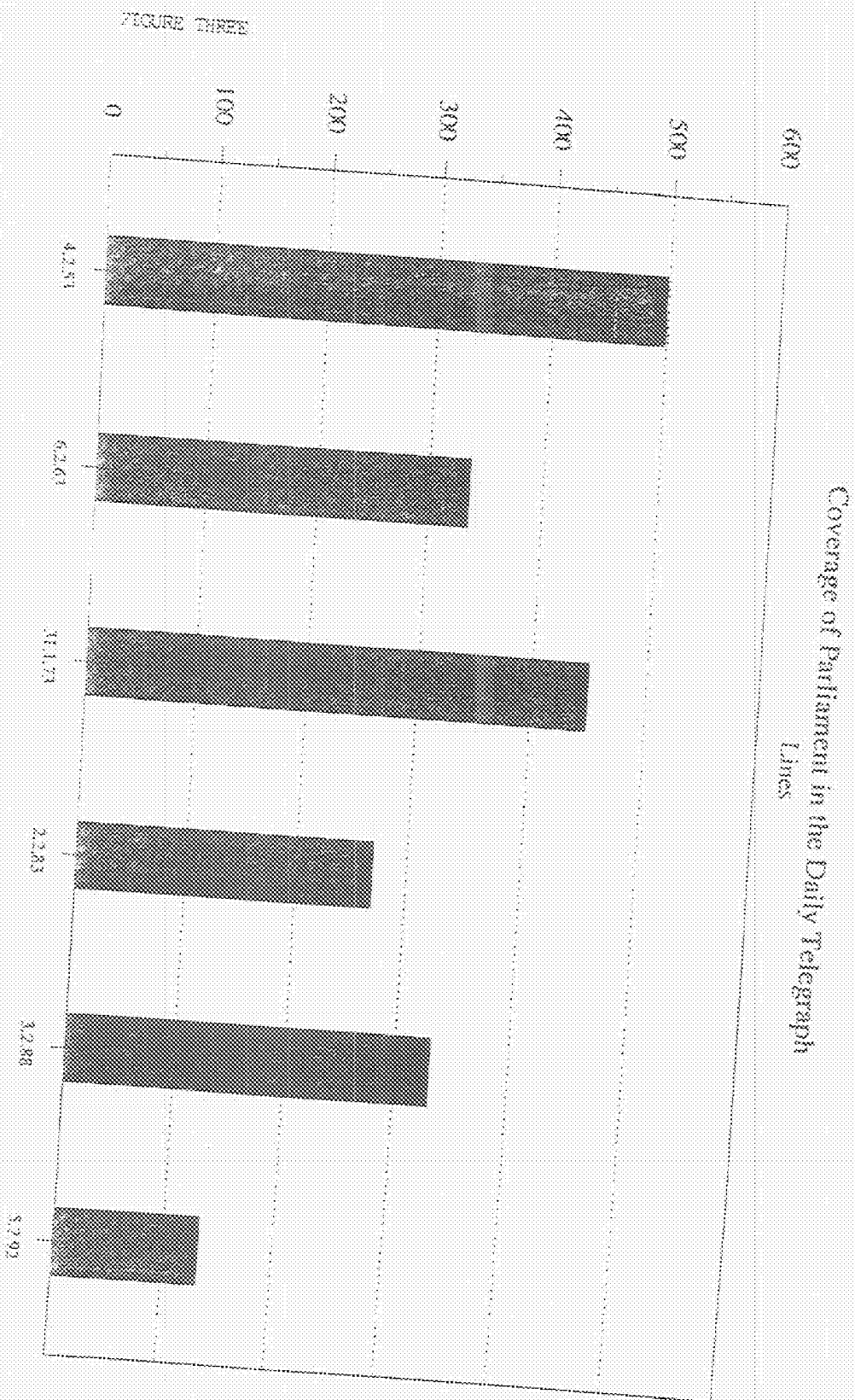


FIGURE FOUR

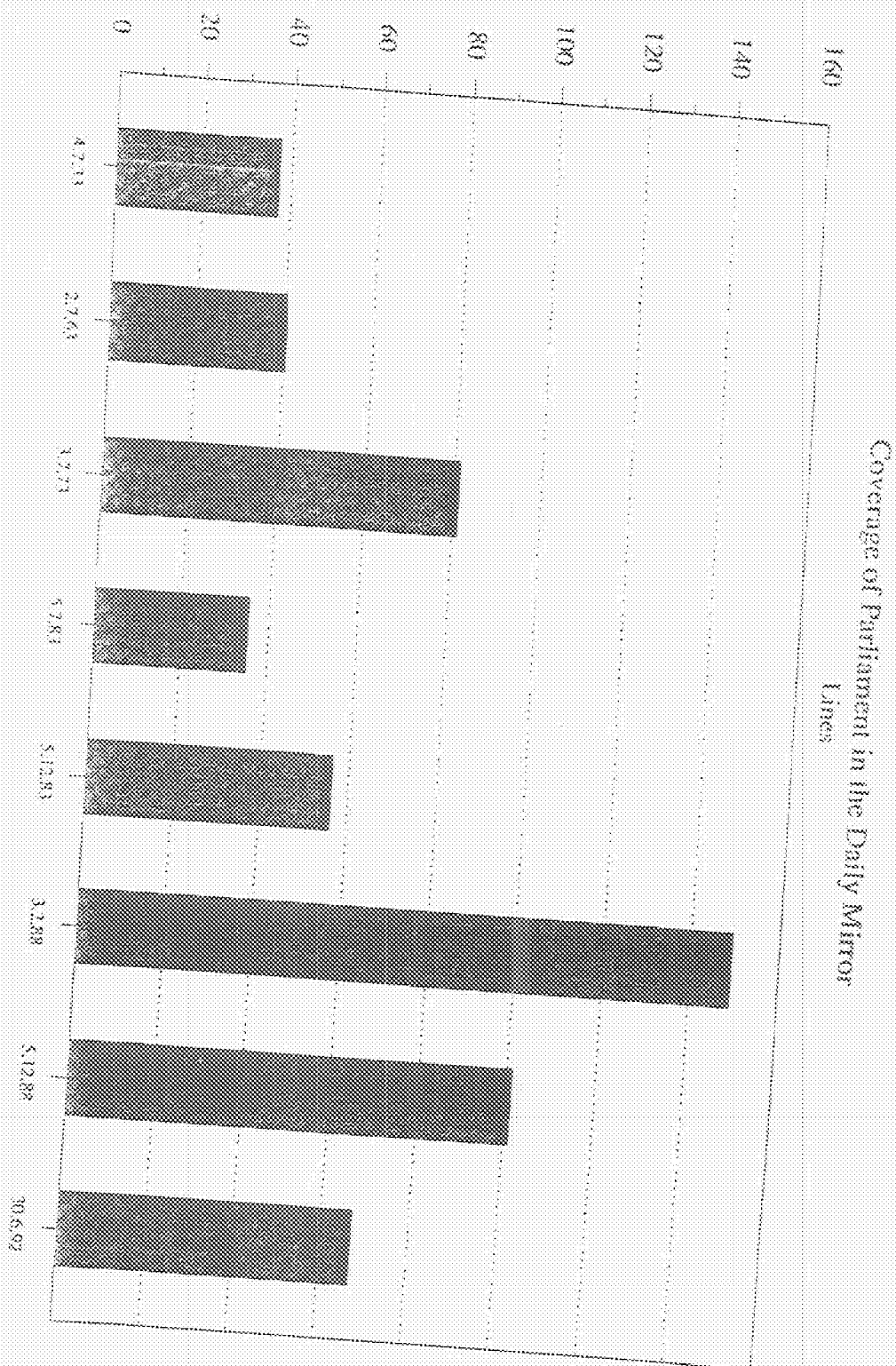




FIGURE FIVE

