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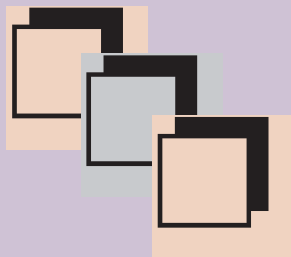
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Comment

Here is my question: what do you think about politicians? If you have read my column for the past several years you would be forgiven for thinking that I don't think much of them. That's not strictly true. There are many good people in the House of Commons. There because they want to contribute something and support their constituents. Take Sarah Edwards, MP for Tamworth. She is chair of the all party, parliamentary group for SME housebuilders. One of the things she is promoting is the idea, put forward by the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), that builders should be licensed. Something we must look at later. (www.thefabricator.pro/article/ai-cant-build-a-house)

No, the ones I have issues with are the politicians who got into it just to rule. To impose their own, often completely daft, ideas on the rest of us.

Take Brexit. Ten years ago, forged on a lie – or a series of lies – by a bunch of politicians (and their advisors) who were (and still are) living in the past and were more interested in the idea that Britannia still 'Rules the Waves' than a relationship with our nearest trading partner. And, as things have developed with the US, our most important security partner too. I recently heard on *Times Radio* a conversation about Brexit ten years on. A listener sent a text to say he had voted 'leave' because he thought that, once we left, it would shut-up the crazy politicians and we would get some better ones.

I don't think it worked!

The other big problem is the media. My colleagues who write the political columns. Back to *Times Radio*. In an interview one of these guys was admitting that they were after Kier Starmer from the off. A 'feeding frenzy' he described it. In fact the first article I read attacking him, written by a senior political editor, was around 8:30 on the morning after the general election. He hadn't even made it into Downing Street.

Assuming, what seems to be the inevitable, Andy Burnham should look up. They are circling already, ready to swoop.

Earlier I mentioned the FMB's call for a licensing scheme for builders. It is based on the reports of clients being scammed by dodgy building firms. Headlines such as 'Essex homeowners lose £448m to rogue builders'. Have prompted this call and on the face of it may be more than a good idea. But let's hang on a minute. Where do we figure in this? At what point will a window installer need to be licensed? Builders often give us work. There are no details as yet but we already have competent person schemes such as FENSA. Would an installer need to be licensed over and above such membership when working for a builder on a new build contract?

Back in the early days the 'double glazing' industry had a bit of a reputation. Much of it deserved with homeowners losing deposits and often subjected to questionable sales tactics. This was a new industry, building has been around for a very long time. The FMB has a very big clean-up job to do but maybe should be careful what it wishes for. Licensing would undoubtedly involve government and that is seldom a good idea.

John Roper

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