

CHRIS MULLIN ON LORDS REFORM

In his latest best-selling diaries, *Decline & Fall* (2010), Chris Mullin variously refers to the attempts in the last Parliament by Jack Straw to achieve a largely elected second chamber. Mullin was one of the Labour MPs opposed to what was being proposed. He writes about the 2007 votes on proposals for reform:

Wednesday, 7 March:

“Much excitement this evening when, after two days’ debate, we voted by a substantial majority to ‘democratise’ the Lords. Fogies such as myself were against, on the grounds that an elected upper house will only undermine the authority of the Commons...

I can’t say that I am overjoyed at the prospect of an upper house filled with C-list candidates who have failed to get into our end of the building – or rejects from the Scottish, Welsh or European parliaments. The idea that a wholly elected house will be any more democratic than the present arrangements is likely to prove fanciful since the odds are that it will involve some sort of list system and inclusion on that is likely to require the *imprimatur* of the very same person who currently nominates people to the upper house – our beloved leader, no less.”