

View from the House

The new session of Parliament began with the Queen's speech delivered by the Queen in the Lords but written by the Government.

The issue of privatising the Land Registry is causing controversy. The Competition and Markets Authority said 'there is a significant risk' that a business engaged in both the supply of monopoly data and the supply of commercial products based on the data 'would not maintain or improve access' to the data. The media, conveyancers, trades unions and many of my constituents are opposed to this uncalled for move by the Government.

A senior advisor to the World Bank has said that privatising the Land Registry would increase corruption across the UK. The Open Data Institute, set up by the government, warned that the Land Registry would be open to fraud and manipulation if sold into private hands which would make it out of reach of the Freedom of Information Act.

In reply to my written question the Government said they would continue with change only if it will "provide a continued appropriate level of service. The Land Registry is run efficiently, makes a profit for taxpayers and delivers a good service.

The Conservative government has slashed the rate of tax paid by the very wealthiest and failed to collect tens of billions from tax evasion and avoidance and to make up for this now wants to sell off the assets owned by you, the British public. This is hypocritical, bad economics and unpatriotic. We all know that previous Tory governments have sold off our public assets at undervalue and that many are now owned by overseas corporations. We shouldn't allow this to happen to the Land Registry.

The first wave of university students forced to pay £9,000 a year fees by the Coalition have been receiving letters notifying them that interest on their student loan is now attracting a rate of 3.9% and rising to 4.3% this April. Questions that need to be asked include why the Retail Price Index and not the lower Consumer Price Index is being used to set interest rates, why the government has changed the terms of the loans, and have students been mis-sold these loans? Changing the repayment threshold terms for example would just not be legal for other financial products. Students were encouraged to go to university and had no option other than to agree the loan. Why is the Government treating them this way?

Valerie Vaz

29.5.16