

Mob at the gates

Public fury over the Commons expenses scandal has created a leadership vacuum and distracted Britain from creating wealth, argues Alex Pratt



I WONDER HOW Britain expects to stay competitive with our hungrier global rivals when we face such a void at the top. Against a terrible economic and financial backdrop, what is the focus of national life? Are we making and selling more things? Encouraging further wealth creation?

No, that would be far too sensible. Why fix our GDP problems when we can wallow for months as daily spectators of Britain's Got Expenses? We're busy trashing one of the least corrupt establishments in the world from the inside in ways that the rest of the planet can't quite believe.

The House of Commons is likened to a den of crooks interested only in seeking subsidies for moat-cleaning and duck houses. But it is not crooked, just unable to deliver. A dozen bad-apple MPs allegedly evading tax—and the rest doing their best to avoid it according to the rules—is a reflection of life outside, isn't it? There's been a damaging over-reaction and we now face the nightmare of a political class

reacting in shock to the anger of the mob. Under such pressure and in a battle for votes, politicians will not take time to make necessary changes.

Eventually, we'll wake up to the fact that believing the worst in our leaders and assuming guilt before innocence hurts us more than it does them.

Nobody is perfect. There is no way, for example, that Churchill would have survived under the levels of scrutiny

"CHURCHILL WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED TODAY'S LEVELS OF SCRUTINY"

faced by today's public figures. Is there a successful director reading this who's seriously considering becoming an MP in the next parliament?

A wise leader might well reflect on Abraham Lincoln's words: "It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues."

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