

The Daily Telegraph

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tion. Furthermore, America and Japan, like Britain, are suffering from a slump in commercial property, strenuously explain to the voters how Britain's current difficulties fit into the wider world economy.

The long leg of the law

ON MONDAY night, Mr Justice Harman emerged from his house and kicked a taxi driver. Many people feel the urge to kick a taxi driver from time to time, but most of us decide that the game is not worth the candle. Sir Jeremiah Harman, however, knew not what he did. He thought that the taxi driver (who had come, at his request, to take him away) was a journalist, and, being exasperated by the journalists who were camped out at his house in the hope of seeing Mr Kevin Maxwell, he kicked him. We fear that in kicking someone he thought was a journalist Mr Justice Harman was acting in a way of which many citizens would approve. Nevertheless, we disagree.

People should not kick journalists. There is, as a judge might say, too much of this sort of thing in the metropolis. In particular, judges should

not kick journalists. They punish them quite enough for libel and contempt of court without handing out freelance correction. We are sorry if it sounds old fashioned, but we are also against judges kicking people in general.

The next day, Sir Jeremiah left his house accompanied by two "mind-ers". Why was this necessary? There was no suggestion that any journalists (or taxi drivers) were planning a revenge attack. The men were presumably present, therefore, not to protect the judge, but to discourage him from kicking anyone else to whom he happened to take a dislike. This is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. Mr Justice Harman should control himself, and apologise to the taxi driver. If he really *must* kick someone, let him keep it, as it were, in the family, and kick a barrister.