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**Press Complaints Commission**

*From the Chairman*

Sir Bernard Ingham  
Secretary  
SONE  
c/o BNES: 7 Great George Street  
London  
SW1P 3ZS

10<sup>th</sup> February 2005

*Chairman*  
Sir Christopher Meyer  
*Members of the Commission*  
Matti Alderson  
Roger Alton  
Professor The Lord Chan  
Edmund Curran  
Paul Dacre  
Jane Ennis  
Mary Francis  
Dr. Arthur Hearnden  
Vivien Hepworth  
Peter Hill  
Paul Horrocks  
Charles McGhee  
Adam Phillips  
Eve Salomon  
Dianne Thompson  
The Right Rev. John Waine KCVO  
*Director*  
Tim Toulmin

*Jean Bernard,*

Thank you for your letter of 6<sup>th</sup> February. It was excellent to hear from my old mentor, whom I repeatedly cite as the best government spokesman since 1945. I have asked my secretary to fix up a lunch – something I should have done ages ago.

As to your letter – your robustness of expression has lost nothing in the passage of the years – allow me to make a few observations. None of us in Salisbury Square is an expert on power generation as you are. We are no doubt poorer for this; and there will be many other specialised areas where the PCC will be unable to match the knowledge of the experts.

But, at the risk of provoking a Krakatoan explosion, I submit that this is beside the point. The merits of nuclear power, as opposed to other forms of energy generation, are controversial. If it were otherwise, there would not be an organisation call SONE and you would not be its Secretary. I recently followed an intense controversy in an American magazine, in which experts blazed away at each other about the relative merits of nuclear, wind, water, coal, oil, gas, pig manure – all of them citing what appeared to be impeccably conducted research.

It is not for us at the PCC to pick our way through those controversies and make an *ex cathedra* ruling on who is right. It is our role to make a judgement on whether a publication was entitled to write what it wrote, consistent with the Code of Practice. That is what we did in this case; and I would enjoin you to read the adjudication again, in this light. In the last analysis, *New Scientist* presented a view with which you disagree. The magazine is entitled to its opinion. The remedy was to have written a letter for publication in the magazine, setting out the SONE view (as opposed to seeking a correction, which I gather from the correspondence is what  wanted).

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You will be pleased to know that issues of accuracy provide the bulk of our work. Intrusion into privacy, contrary to what you might expect from reading the press (!), is of lesser concern to those who seek our help.

I hope the above does not deter you from coming to lunch.

*Yours ever,*



**Sir Christopher Meyer**