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Kindling for the quango bonfire [1]

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As David Cameron promised before the election, the ?bonfire of the quangos? has begun. 177 of these bodies are for the chop, 4 will be privatised, and another 129 merged. In addition, 94 are still under review, which if scrapped could take the total number of abolished quangos to well over 250. If we include the other 129 mergers, then the Coalition could get rid of nearly 400 quangos.

Already the quangocrats are squealing about their jobs going up in flames. Baroness Deech, a former chairman of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority attacked the decision to scrap that body. She told the Today programme: ?It was trailed, and it's raised great dismay.? I don?t think the public will be complaining about no longer having to fund these pointless bodies and the vast reams of people they employ, often on outrageous salaries. The scrapping of Quangos should provide billions of pounds worth of easy and popular savings for the government.

While I welcome the Coalition?s decision, there are still numerous pointless bodies that have survived the chop. 350 quangos have been approved to stay on, with bodies like the Food Standards Agency, which was in line to be scrapped, surviving the cull. We can only hope that these will be abolished at some point in the future.

In the mean time, the remaining quangos should be fully accountable to Parliament. As well as this, sunset clauses should be put in place for the remaining quangos so that they have to justify their renewal to Parliament after a certain period of time. Such legislation would ensure that the surviving quangos would become more democratically accountable and that they do not outstay their welcome if they become outdated. But all in all, this is a good start by the Coalition.

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