

House of Lords Reform Under the Blair Government: The Composition and Functions of the Second Chamber

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The Blair government had committed itself to reforming the House of Lords since the Labour Party came to power in 1997. The government's proposals for Lords reform were discussed inside and outside Parliament. In particular, the report published by the Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords, under the chairmanship of Lord Wakeham, is still significant.

The Lords reform carried out by the Blair government has brought about a change in the composition and functions of the Lords. The rights of all but 92 hereditary peers to sit in the Lords have been removed. A Supreme Court will be established separately from the Lords. Three Acts passed without the agreement of the Lords under the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949.

However, the ratio of elected to appointed members of the reformed second chamber and the balance of power between the two Houses of Parliament remain to be addressed.

Through utilizing an institutional approach, this article shows how the composition and functions of the second chamber have been reformed in the British political system.