Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative) Click here to watch Sarah live

Does my hon. Friend accept that that should be extended to national newspapers? There is indeed a stifling of debate about scientific issues in the national press, and very many of our constituents do not read the scientific press and need access to good scientific debate in the national press.

Julian Huppert (Cambridge, Liberal Democrat)

I thank the hon. Lady for her comment. She is right that we need to encourage more educated scientific debate among the general public. That is a larger issue than the subject of the present debate. The question is how far one goes in providing the sort of privilege that we are talking about. Peer review processes are significantly better developed than what we see in newspapers. I would expect newspapers to have more access to lawyers who could advise on libel because they deal with a range of issues. But there may be ways of going slightly closer to what the hon. Lady suggests and I would encourage something like that to happen.

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