

St Paul's and the rule of law

by Francis Bennion

You report the Prime Minister as saying of the St Paul's Cathedral protesters: 'you shouldn't be able to erect tents all over the place' (*The Times*, 9 November 2011). In fact the law prevents this, if it is enforced.

For example many of the tents appear to be placed on land which in law constitutes a highway. Section 1(1) of the Criminal Law Act 1977, combined with section 137 of the Highways Act 1980, renders this a criminal conspiracy. Yet the police do nothing to prevent it. It seems that the City and Cathedral authorities are telling the City of London police to do nothing, and the police are obeying them.

This inaction is itself against the law. In the Blackburn case 1968 Lord Denning rebuked the Metropolitan Police for similar inaction, saying that it is the duty of every chief constable to enforce the law. 'He must take steps so to post his men that crimes may be detected; and that honest citizens may go about their affairs in peace'.

We are supposed to live under the rule of law. Please let us have the law enforced where necessary.¹

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References:

None

¹ Published in *The Times* 14 November 2011.