***Text 2 is an extract from a Parliamentary debate in 1995 about whether or not boxing should be made illegal. In this text, Mr Greenway, MP for Ealing North, is arguing against the ban in response to Mr Callaghan who has argued for the ban.***

‘I beg to oppose the Bill, but, in doing so, I acknowledge that no honourable member doubts the sincerity of Mr Callaghan or his consistency of view in this important matter.

Mr Callaghan mentioned a catalogue of deaths in boxing, and I am quite prepared, in defending boxing, to stand up and say that 14 boxers have been killed since 1946. However, I ask the House to set against that statistic the fact that, this winter alone, many more people than that have died on the Cairngorms while mountaineering. No Member has come to the House to say that mountaineering should therefore be made illegal.

There is an extremely serious inconsistency in the honourable gentleman's argument. I remind him and the House that people can choose whether to box, just as they can choose whether to go mountaineering, with all the known attendant dangers.

The tragic case of Michael Watson and the others mentioned by the honourable gentleman moved the House as they moved this country. Such suffering moves the world, as does the suffering of people in any sport who are damaged almost to the point of death. I would remind the House that Mr. Sutcliffe, the surgeon who operated on McClellan, does not want boxing banned, and nor do many other doctors, who know that it would only go underground if it were.

We really must not take the nanny state to the extremes. Boxing is a very dangerous sport, as is my own main sport of horse riding. I mentioned mountaineering, but there are also many other dangerous sports, such as skiing, rugby football, motor car racing and cycle racing.

People have even died jogging, but this is a serious matter, and I want to consider the lethal sports. People are killed in motor racing, but nobody suggests that that should be stopped.

Boxing would not in any event be stopped if the Bill were passed. It would go underground. People would fight with bare fists, unlicensed and without medical supervision. What a dreadful society we would create if that were allowed to happen. What would happen to people drawn in against their will, as they would be if boxing were not open and they were unable to refuse? Is that what the honourable gentleman wants? I am sure that it is not.

Boxing teaches people the art of self-defence. Boys enjoy boxing. I have helped in boxing clubs in my constituency and in East London, where boys have learned the art of boxing and become involved in an activity which has given them life when nothing else could. Does Mr Callaghan want to take that away from such boys? Many come off the streets, they learn the art of boxing, and they learn self-discipline, often for the first time. Why should that be taken from them? They enjoy it, their families enjoy it, and the community enjoys it.

With all deference to the honourable gentleman, is he not aware of clubs all over London where boxing takes place? Does he not know that boxing is returning to schools, and that, in such clubs, schools and other areas, there is very close supervision of the sport? That is its great value. There is medical supervision, training and skill in the sport.

There is no doubt that boxing is a fine, well-supervised sport. This House would do ill even to contemplate abolishing it.