

RECEIVED
14 MAY 2009

Mrs. J. Waite.

Near Pathhead,
Midlothian,

Sir Christopher Kelly,
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London.

8th May 2009

Dear Sir,

Along with thousands of others, I have been shocked and sickened at the revelations regarding Members of Parliament's rates of salaries and especially the expenses they can "legitimately" claim. In view of this, I would like to make a few suggestions that seem reasonable to me as a voting pensioner:

1) MP's should not be allowed to set their own rates of pay and allowances but this should be given to an independent committee and their recommendations should be binding.

2) Regarding their allowances:

a) Parliament should purchase a block of flats for the number of constituencies outside one hour's travel to Parliament. These should be furnished with the basic items required and re-allocated by ballot at each General Election. That way, members are not able to pick and choose which one they get. These could be maintained by a properly tendered firm and also have the appropriate security in place. Furniture and carpets etc. would all be of a similar standard. Should any MP wish other items of furniture, they will be able to purchase these themselves without being able to claim for them. No MP will be able to claim for second homes if they come into this category. No family home will then be able to be classed as a second home.

b) Travel by MP's will be by public transport where required. If trains or flights are involved in necessary travel to and from Constituencies outside one hour's travel, these will be by Economy class not First class and will not include family members or staff.

c) Constituency staff will be hired through the House of Commons and posts properly advertised. Staff will be paid by Westminster and any travel expenses they incur in the pursuit of their work -but not travel between place of work and home will be covered at the same rate as given to Local Council staff. Office overheads will be paid by Westminster on receipt of invoices.

d) Westminster office overheads will keep strictly to office requirements and will not include unnecessary items such as flowers and plants. Any MP wishing these can bear the cost of same.

e) Any MP who has bought a second home and had their mortgage paid by the tax-payer should be obliged to return the money they have been given on the sale of that property. They should also be made to pay Capital Gains Tax. As a pensioner, I am having to pay this on property I bought for my late mother to live in.

Sir, This is not a full wish-list of what should be done but will go some way towards rectifying the disgust we voters are experiencing at the way MP's are using the system to their own advantage without any thought of how others are having to cope in this country.

Yours faithfully,