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From: M Elaine
Sent: 16 May 2009 11:14
To: Inquiry
Subject: MPs' expenses; simple solution

To the Committee on Standards in Public Life,

I hope a member of the public may be allowed to make a suggestion (quotations in blue are taken from your own "Review of MPs' Expenses").

As a member of the public, it would seem a simple solution to "the question of how accommodation should be managed for MPs who need to have a base in London as well as their constituency", were that London accommodation to take the form of a dedicated block of serviced furnished flats, provided and controlled centrally by the House of Commons for the use of MPs. This would surely be much less expensive and simpler to administrate than the present system of multiple individual claims, and would save such expenses as "the costs of legal fees and other costs associated with a purchase of a home, including stamp duty, valuation and solicitors fees," as well as mortgage interest.

This would comply with "19. Wherever practical and economic, such resources should be centrally procured, and subject to occasional audit to ensure propriety and value for money."

MPs' staff and office costs should also be centrally controlled.

"A number of MPs have remunerated interests outside Parliament, including sitting on boards of directors and advisory committees, journalism, dentistry, and farming.

In its first report in 1995 the Committee on Standards expressed the view that "The House of Commons would be less effective if all MPs were full-time professional politicians, and MPs should not be prevented from having outside employment."

I notice that MPs' outside interests seem to be confined to areas of wealth; why not include voluntary work in less privileged areas, in order to learn what life for others is *really* like?

Yours sincerely,
E Mencher

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