

Petersfield,

18th May 2009

Sir Christopher Kelly
Committee on Standards in Public Life
c/o Palace of Westminster
London SW1

MPs Expenses

Dear Sir Christopher,

As an ordinary member of the public I hope I may be allowed to comment?

- I object to MPs receiving tax-free contributions to their mortgages on second homes (or on any property) especially as these homes will in due course become far more valuable even after paying capital gains tax. All income of MPs should be taxed.
- Public servants who need to live away from their primary home should be accommodated in government-owned property for the period of their service, as was the case in British India. (My late father was a member of the ICS and never owned any of the homes in which we lived. I remember our cement-floored bathroom, galvanised iron bath and corrugated iron roof to my sister's and my bedroom).
- Because so many MPs have been found to have been misusing the expenses system there needs to be a fully independent body to which they may apply for reimbursement of legitimate expenses, fully supported by receipts.
- In future, if an MP is found to be acting in a way detrimental to the honour of his/her position, he/she should be suspended immediately from attendance at the House of Commons until his/her case has been investigated by an independent body and only be allowed back when proved innocent.
- MPs' secretaries should work in some sort of pool, not necessarily for any particular MP, with salary paid by the government. MPs' home telephones could be automated to be answered only in their constituency office or in Westminster according to where the MP is at the time of any call. It is very undesirable to have any family member working on an MP's behalf as this gives rise to suspicions as to the MP's total salary and independence.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs E Mackeown