

A Thorpe

Chichester

17 May 2009

Sir Christopher Kelly
c/o The House of Commons
Whitehall
London
SW1 0PW

Dear Sir Christopher

1. You have the most unenviable task of restoring public confidence in the Parliament representative system which has seriously let down their voters. I should say the recent TV presentation by the Rt. Hon David Cameron did restore some faith.
2. After 50 years public service [31 years in the RN retiring as a Captain and then 19 years as a Circuit Judge] I do know something about how the public finances work and travel costs work. I do say with regret that I have sent people to prison who have acted less venially than the reported cases.
3. May I with diffidence offer some practical ideas:
 - MPs pay to be linked that of District Judges so the heat over pay would disappear.
 - All MPs should be deemed to have a house [the main house] in their constituency.
 - Clearly any Minister with a Grace and Favour House can claim nothing for any other house.
 - MPs within the M25 should commute like to the rest of the population, who are not allowed Home to Duty travel costs to be paid. The cost of travel for families should be severely restricted to necessary occasions, and foreign travel should be restricted to what is necessary for an MP to inform himself over his duties.
 - Any MP having to work late in London or living outside the M25 can claim overnight hotel expenses up to the Government approved limit [currently £80 for Judges of the Parole Board].
 - Secretariat support should be provided by the House of Commons and no family members should be employed, just as in Congress.

4. There can be no question of paying for mortgages, food or household goods.
5. I do appreciate that my suggestions will fall on very stony ground although I do copy them to the PM and the Leader of the Opposition who still do not really understand the depth of public anger. If I said the public regard MPs as having a character below that of Estate Agents I hope I can make the point. I have the feeling that at least Mr. David Cameron is grasping the point.
6. You are very busy and I do not expect a reply. I just wish you luck with the poisoned chalice that even Medusa would have refused. The Romans had a point when asked about dubious practices and asked "Cui Bono ?"
7. I am copying this letter to the PM and The Leader of the Opposition, and my own MP but expect no replies.

Yours truly