

Godalming

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Dear Sir,

In the light of recent revelations you are in a unique position in being able to lead our Parliament into the 21st century without MPs being in a position to reject or cherry pick your recommendations. However I am concerned that you will only be listening to the sort of person who, when informed of Sir Fred's pension thought that £700,000 a year for catastrophic failure was about right. One gets the impression that there are too many people around Westminster who wouldn't get out of bed for a salary less than £100,000. I hope you are not paying such people too much attention.

I don't know what the average wage for workers in the UK is but my guess is something much less than £20,000 per year. I hope when you are assessing MPs salaries and expenses you will consider that the majority of people in this country raise their families on a fraction of an MP's salary. We are continually informed that if we want honest MPs we have to pay them a reasonable salary. But considering the lack of qualifications and that many of them are voting fodder £64,776 is sufficient. (There is no lack of applicants) It is the sort of money most of us wouldn't even dream about. Had their salaries been doubled would their expense claims have been smaller?

Your terms of reference probably restrict what you may recommend.
Herewith are some thoughts on what I think should be considered.

As we have Government of the people for the people by the people (allegedly) would it be acceptable if MPs salaries of £64,766 be increased only at the same rate as the average earnings across the whole of the UK? How about their salaries being paid in proportion to the number of times they turn up for work? Why not run Parliament on normal office hours? When a debate is attended by 20 MPs what are the missing 626 doing, and if they haven't heard the debate should they be permitted to vote on it? How many MPs are needed to run this country? Should MPs holidays be brought into line with the rest of the population? Similarly their severance pay and pensions. Should MPs be permitted to ignore civil servants and employ advisers and consultants and pay them from the public purse? Do we have too many Committees? Are so many fact finding tours necessary? Why not limit the second home expense by excluding anyone who could get to work in say 90 minutes using public transport? Should we provide State owned accommodation for those who need it? Should any item purchased with taxpayers money always remain the property of the State? Should being an MP be a full time one and only job? If an MP has another paid job (or lots more) which of them commands his loyalty? Should an MP be permitted to employ close relatives who may be paid regardless of their worth? After leaving Parliament should an MP be forbidden to take employment in any way connected with his public office? Members must never again exempt themselves from the taxation they impose on those they serve. Transgressions of clear and concise rules should automatically involve court action.

Yours faithfully,

(R.F.Willis)