

For Information, & hopefully, guidance.

ES4

Cornwall

Tel:

RECEIVED
14 MAY 2009

The Secretary
Committee on Standards in Public Life
Houses of Parliament
Westminster
London

12th May 09

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you at your constituency office, because I do not believe that this letter would get any further than a minion if sent to Westminster, and I believe the subject to be too serious to be buried. I enclose a copy of the letter sent on March 27th to John Lyon, Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for Standards, and whilst I am pleased to note that one of my suggestions has already been acted upon, I am not so arrogant as to believe that my letter was the only catalyst.

On this occasion, it is the fourth paragraph which I feel is the relevant one, covering MP's second homes, and their funding, and it should be read in conjunction with the following clarifications and additional comments. Should MP's be allowed, say for example, £300,000 to fund the purchase and equipping of a second home, (I realise that this is not a fortune, especially in the south east, but let us not forget we are not funding a family residence, merely a "pied à terre"), then the cost involved in the initial setting up of the "Housing Fund" would be less than £200 million, and once in place would be self funding.

The above fund would need to be put into operation immediately, but would grow gradually in size to a maximum operating level, as MP's retired or were replaced, and new incumbents were elected. It goes without saying that those sitting members who already have second homes, should, on the sale of the property, repay all monies received from the taxpayer by way of mortgage interest relief or for the equipping or enhancement of the property. This would make any profiteering at the tax payers' expense less likely.

To ensure the complete impartiality of the scheme, it should be administered by an independent trust, one with no axe to grind, and one with no political or civil service involvement.

A second independent organisation should also be set up to effectively monitor MP's expenses, which should always be accompanied by a relevant receipt. Why should MP's be allowed to operate any differently to every business large or small in the country? The time is long past when a member of parliament should be allowed (encouraged?) to abuse a system of payment which was set up by the very people who

would be taking advantage of it. Self regulation never ever works, as is evident by the total lack of control exercised over the medical or legal professions by their peers, or as has recently been shown, by the financial services industry.

The disgust and anger voiced by the entire country through the media is ample evidence of the lack of trust and disbelief that is felt nationally, that the persons elected to protect our interests can be so self-centred and corrupt. You and the party members you profess to lead now have one chance to rectify the appalling situation that currently exists. Please, for all our sakes, and for the sake of political integrity in the UK, don't waste it.

Yours Faithfully

C A Bullows

CC Gordon Brown
David Cameron
Nick Clegg
Secy. Members Estimate Committee
Secy. Committee on Standards in Public Life

From: C A Bullows, Higher Fraddon, Cornwall

John Lyon

Chairman, Parliamentary Commission for Standards

Houses of Parliament

Westminster

27th March 2009

Dear Sir

I understand from the media that you are to shortly undertake a detailed investigation into the claims for expenses made by Members of Parliament. This is most certainly long overdue, since our illustrious members have for many years been fiddling their books and making unjustifiable claims to supplement their already exorbitant and unwarranted salaries.

Firstly, Second Homes

Whilst it can not be disputed that many MP's need to operate two residences to fulfil their obligations, this is most certainly not the case for those whose constituencies are within the Greater London area, and the expenses claimed against these second homes need to be monitored and controlled. We are told that an MP has claimed £60,000 in expenses over a four year period against a home that is owned by his parents. Since he apparently claims to have stayed there for on average two nights a week, are we to understand that his parents have spent £120,000 over the corresponding period, as they have sole occupancy for the other five days a week? Can we assume also that they have paid tax on the original £60,000, this being "cash in kind" so far as we mere mortals are concerned? And when the property is sold or "passed on", will a percentage of the enhanced value be returned to the exchequer?

I have lived in my present bungalow for 10 years, and over that period, even though I have invested in full double glazing, a double glazed porch, mild landscaping to front and rear gardens, a new patio of approx 115 square metres, a 30 metre long wall, some 90 metres of fencing, repairs to the roof, and the fitting out of a fully tiled en-suite, I still have change from £20,000. This makes the MP's £60,000 look decidedly suspicious.

MP's second residences should be provided by the state to a predetermined specification, maintenance should be controlled by the state, and on the occasion of the MP relinquishing his seat for whatever reason, the property should be offered to the new incumbent, and if declined, it should then be sold on the open market at a realistic market value, and the proceeds returned to what might be termed "The Housing Fund". The current system whereby we as taxpayers provide and maintain properties for MP's, only for them to sell them on their retirement and pocket the proceeds must cease.

Secondly, Expenses

We are told that MP,s are allowed to charge up to £250 expenses at any one time without providing substantiating receipts. Why is this massive loophole allowed to exist? I was in business for nearly 20 years, and in senior management for a further 25 years, and during that time I was never allowed by the Inland Revenue to claim for so much as a packet of paperclips without a receipt. Why should MP's be any different?

The problem stems from the fact that every single MP is deceitful by nature. It sadly appears to be the major criterion by which any political system operates, and of course the corruption which is practiced by the vast majority of our MP's is but a small step further. How the system can be cleaned up, when the person delegated with monitoring and maintaining the standards of the House (I understand this is the Speaker) has apparently also been taking advantage of the extremely liberal operating rules if media reports are to be believed, I do not know, but at least you have a god given opportunity to try.

You weren't expecting a knighthood or elevation to the Lords were you?

Yours faithfully

C A Bullows (Mr)