

Tel:

RECEIVED
02 SEP 2009

Camberley
Surrey

27 August 2009

To: Sir Christopher Kelly
Chairman
Committee on Standards in Public Life

RECEIVED
02 SEP 2009

E758

Dear Sir Christopher

I enclose a copy of my suggested rules for MPs' pay and expenses that I sent to David Cameron last year. A lot has happened since!

I am not alone in thinking our present Members seem not to understand the principles of public service, or that it is disgraceful to claim for so many ridiculous things as the Daily Telegraph has discovered. The Nuremberg excuse of 'only following orders' was not, and is not acceptable.

There has never been a shortage of applicants for their jobs and I have sought candidature several times when it would have meant a lower salary; now, with a degree in double physics and years of engineering management experience I am unemployed, and angry. Banks paid a lot more than peanuts, getting just bigger monkeys, while a Harvard paper showed that there was no relation between company performance and boardroom pay. Hence my 5X rule, which would reconnect MPs with the voting public. (Elsewhere I have argued for no pensions to be paid - public, State or private - before age 70, other than on grounds of ill health.)

Both my brother and myself have worked overseas and our employers have provided the furnished accommodation and support as they would if we had just spent a couple of days off-site in the UK. We kept our own homes in England, and paid everything out of our own income. Neither we nor our colleagues received anything that could be conceived as capital, or anything that could be sold for a profit. Who do MPs think they are? If people have wives and families, that is their concern and their concern only, hence I also object to the new Speaker using public money on 'alterations' to his grace-and-favour flat for his children.

I have found support from life-long active socialists for a minimum age, as in France and the USA. This would have a secondary effect of giving the girls the opportunity to get their babies over and done with, and hopefully, the men would have had proper jobs.

There has actually been talk of raising MPs' pay. Please pinch this in the bud, else once again I will have to take to the streets in protest. I do hope your Committee gets matters under control and that once again, Members might be deemed Honourable.

Yours sincerely

H A Prowse (Miss)

MPS' PAY & EXPENSES

1. Pay should be 5X basic state pension. Of course the latter must be raised, not just 'in line with earnings' because it is the actual rate that is the problem, not its rate of increase. I suggest £10k and £50k; after all, no qualifications or experience are currently demanded of our so-called representatives.
2. Pensions must, like everyone else's, be 1/60 of annual salary times number of years of service.
3. Housing allowances for MPs outside London should be just an annual rental fee, perhaps £1000 a month. It is a matter of revenue, not capital. MPs married to other MPs are expected to live together; if one represents a London constituency then only one (1) housing allowance will be paid. Everything, but everything, will require the production and audit of receipts.
4. Expenses have got out of hand. People are expected to pay for their own food, but the costs of travel essential to the job should be recompensed. No furnishings should be charged - the monthly rental allowance should cover utilities - and MPs should buy what they want out of taxed pay like the rest of us.
5. Nannies and childcare are out of the question. Taxpayers should not be expected to fund life-style choices and mothers of small children are not only too young to be MPs but they have other priorities.
6. Working expenses must be brought into line with common business practice. Ideally the Westminster facilities would be from a common pool - office accommodation, secretariat, IT and notepaper - but constituency bases will always vary. I would like to see the Party fund a party base in every constituency (including NI), but often there may be arrangements with a local authority for a room in the town hall. Again, every expense will be subject to a receipt and audit.
7. Relatives may of course be permitted to work for an MP, but on the same terms as anyone else, ie, full-time pay for full-time work; professionals do not charge for overtime. The number of 'research assistants' around only reflects the ignorance of the members themselves; there should be some combination of effort, for example, the Conservative Party could make better use of the expertise among its ordinary members.
8. Outside interests will continue, and why not? The actual hours of the House are limited and for example, pilots need to keep up their hours. The best men work and thrive better on a 60-hour week. The 'family-friendly' reforms of the Blair Babes must be reversed, so that work can once again continue into the night. (Really, as this Government has given so much over to Brussels do they have to justify their existence by inventing new laws?)

* * * * *

H Prowse, June 2008