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Blairgowrie
Perthshire

22 May 2009

Sir Christopher Kelly KCB
Chairman
Committee on Standards in Public Life
Houses of Parliament
London SW1A 0AA

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Dear Sir Christopher

I write as a taxpayer who has been concerned by the profligacy of this Government since long before the present furore.

I acknowledge that your current inquiry is limited to MPs' expenses.

Also I welcome the latest interim measures put forward by the Party Leaders and Speaker Martin.

However, these do not appear to be sufficiently far reaching. In order for Members of Parliament to regain public trust they need to show that they do not expect to live a privileged lifestyle as a result of their working life.

It is obvious that their work entails two main locations but for the avoidance of doubt, there should be no choice over first or second homes. The MP, upon election, should be prepared to commit to the people he/she represents and who have shown their faith by electing them. This should be done by living within the constituency, thereby being in touch with local feeling on all issues. If an individual is not prepared to do this are they worthy of the position?

As far as presence in Westminster is concerned, this could be addressed by a number of different solutions, including hostel accommodation or sensibly capped hotel expenses but there should be absolutely no opportunity for profit at taxpayers' expense. Food should not be an allowable expense. Everyone has to eat during their working day and all of us expect to pay for ourselves. MPs already enjoy the benefit of subsidised restaurants within Westminster. This should be more than enough.

From this arises the matter of travel between the two locations. Travel should only be paid for at a standard rate, that is Inland Revenue mileage rate or public transport economy class. If certain individuals find this less than acceptable they should pay for any extra comfort themselves.

No doubt my letter will be one of many that you will receive. I sincerely hope that you too understand the strength of feeling on this issue and make your recommendations appropriately.

Yours sincerely

P J Damodaran

