

Submission from B Clark

1. House of Lords.

- Abolish the House of Lords. All current Members of the House of Lords to be removed.
- Abolish all so called honorary titles such as Knighthoods, Lord, Lady, Dame, Duchess etc. There is no reason why those most privileged should gain even more privileges by being given a seat in the House of Lords or a Title. The only titles to remain would be for the Royals and that needs to be severely curtailed to a direct line from the Queen.
- Create a new elected second House based on proportional representation in line with the proportion of votes each party obtained at the General Election.
- There must be a way for every Member of the second House to be elected by the general public and it must be prohibited for a Member of the second House to be selected by the Government or any of the political parties.
- The second House to be dissolved whenever there is a general election and new second House elections held.
- The numbers in the Second House to be reduced to around 300.
- Expenses for Members of the House of Lords and the new Second House need to be published and reviewed.

2. Parliament

- The number of MP's to be reduced to as near as can be to around 350.
- All Government MP's should be given a free vote on all subjects other than items contained in the Party Manifesto.
- Opposition MP's should also have free votes on all subjects except when voting on the items contained in the elected Government Manifesto.
- The second home allowance should be abolished and replaced with second home loans. These loans would have to be repaid when the home is sold.
- To ensure that the second home is sold for the true value, three separate independent valuations would have to be obtained to prove the sale price of the second home and would have to be approved by the leader of the political party to which they belong or belonged.
- The sale of the second home would be subject to normal Capital Gains tax.
- An MP losing his or her Seat would have to sell the second home and repay the loan but see below regarding how the loan would be repaid.
- The second home loan would have to be repaid from the profit on the sale of the second home after Estate Agent fees for the sale of the second home only and Solicitors fees for the sale of the second home only and Capital Gains Tax on the sale of the second home had been paid. If there is insufficient profit on the sale of the second home, the remainder of the loan would be written off.
- An MP changing the designation of the second home would first have to sell the second home and repay the loan.

- The only alternative to selling the second home, would be that three independent valuations are received and the loan is repaid on the basis of the expected profit on the accepted valuation and be approved by the leader of their political party.
- The second home loan would only be available to pay the mortgage and nothing else. As the loan is repayable it can be used to repay mortgage interest and capital.
- For a new MP who qualifies to purchase a second home, for the strict purpose of attending Parliament, a non repayable setting up allowance of say around £2000 would be given as a once only payment, to furnish or update the second home.
- The second home will always be the home purchased in London for the purpose of attending Parliament.
- MP's may claim the actual costs of the following items in their second homes: fuel used to heat the home, electricity, the fixed cost of the telephone line, the cost of broadband in the second home and the actual cost of Council Tax on the second home.
- MP's will be able to reclaim the actual cost of business telephone calls made from the second home or the main home.
- In lieu of purchasing a second home but for an interim period only not exceeding one year, MP's may claim the cost of renting accommodation or the reasonable cost a hotel in London.
- MP's will not be allowed to claim anything whatsoever on their home in their constituency, which will for the purpose of second home loans, expenses and Capital Gains Tax; will always be designated as their main home.
- MP's with a second home in London, whether rented or owning or in a hotel, will be able to reclaim their own actual personal travel costs to and from their constituencies whilst Parliament is sitting, closing or opening. However, the cost of travel for their families or partners or any other person will be at the expense of the MP.
- MP's with constituencies less than 40 miles from Central London will not be able to claim second home loans.
- Where there are two MP's (married, civil partnership or living together etc.) only one loan will be claimable and only one setting up allowance can be claimed (no dual claims will be accepted).
- MP's will no longer be classed as self employed.
- MP's will be employed as Civil Servants and be subject to the same Civil Servant terms and conditions of employment as would a Clerical Officer or Clerical Assistant etc. employed in the Civil Service.
- MP's would therefore be subject to normal PAYE.
- The MP's Pension Scheme will be closed and transferred to the Civil Service Pension Scheme. However, their pension entitlement will be attained by the number of years a transfer value from their current pension scheme would purchase in the Civil Service Pension Scheme but must not exceed the maximum number of pensionable years service available under the Civil Service Pension Scheme.
- MP's will receive the same percentage annual pay increases as that awarded to the Civil Service.
- MP's will not be able to reclaim the cost of such items as Congestion Charges or Tolls when travelling between either of their homes and Parliament.

- Approved mileage will be payable in accordance with the Civil Service travelling rules.
- So called MP's fact finding visits abroad or whatever name they go by, will no longer be allowed unless specifically authorised as absolutely necessary by the leader of their political party and will be overseen prior to arranging the trip, by the Audit Office. Any family or whoever, accompanying MP's on authorised trips abroad will be at the cost of MP concerned.
- Although MP's should be employed on the terms and conditions relating to the Civil Service, they should be employed on short term contracts which automatically expire when Parliament is dissolved or they are deselected, or are sacked for gross misconduct. A legally binding clause should be inserted in MP's contract of employment that there is no right for MP's to sue for breach of contract or unfair dismissal.
- MP's should have set working hours. It is not acceptable that MP's only work a three and a half day week and start work a mid-day.
- MP's should have to keep a record of their working week and for it to be scrutinised to ensure that they are actually fulfilling a 36 hour week on Parliamentary duties.
- MP,s should have the same holiday entitlement as a Clerical Officer or Clerical Assistant would receive in the Civil Service.
- There should be no other expenses claimable by MP's than mentioned in this document.
- It must always be that MP's are subject to the same tax and charges as the general public.
- Alcoholic drinks served in the Houses of Parliament or wherever, should have the subsidy withdrawn.

3. Further Changes Needed for the Public Service

- No person employed in the public service should be paid a bonus unless their total annual pay is less than £20,000 and even then a very strict criteria should be applied. The bonus should be that if an employee does a good job then they keep their job - if not they lose their job.
- No person employed in the public service should receive a salary higher than that paid to the Prime Minister (including Judges, Generals, Civil Servants, Royal Mail, Local Government employees or any other job in the public service – no exclusions). This would also include any so called fringe employments such as the General Lighthouse Service, Royal Mail, Quangos etc etc.
- There should only be one set of rules for employment in the public service for terms and conditions of employment, pension, travel expenses etc. This would apply to all in the public service including Civil Service, Local Government, Police, Teachers, Fire Fighters, Legal Services, NHS workers etc. There should be no exclusions.
- Although there should only be one set of regulations for employment and pensions in the public service, there would obviously have to be separate sections that relate to specific types of employment, for example the Armed Forces, Police and Doctors etc. would obviously need some specific rules but everyone in the public service should receive the same annual pay increase, retire at the same age, contribute the same percentage of their pay to the pension scheme and be subject to the same pension rules relating to the pension they earn and receive.

Banks and Building Societies

- If the Banks or Building Societies or any Company or Corporation continue to pay exorbitant bonuses, a law should be introduced to tax bonuses that equate to above 5% of salary at 90%. This should include goods or services.
- A law should be introduced for Shareholders or Members of any Company or Corporation or Society to veto or approve any executive pay or bonus payments.
- Banks and Investment Banks should be split to either a Bank or and Investment Bank but no bank should be both a Bank and an Investment Bank.
- Investment Banks should be set up so that there are no circumstances where they could end up a liability to the taxpayer.
- Very strict control of the Banks should be introduced to ensure that it is never again possible that they are a liability to the taxpayer.

4. Company Dividends

- Company dividends should be treated as income and taxed at source and taxed at the highest rate of tax. Non taxpayers and standard rate taxpayers would either have to supply a special tax certificate (similar to as you can with savings) or claim the difference back on their annual tax form. At the moment the tax exemption form only exempts non taxpayers, therefore it should be amended to include standard rate tax payers exemption from tax at the higher rate. The taxing at source at the highest rate of tax should apply regardless of whom or how the dividends are paid, including payment to a person, company, corporation, charity or trust etc. etc. and should particularly apply when paid offshore or to anyone or anywhere abroad. There should be no exemptions from this rule.
- There should be no circumstances whereby a higher rate taxpayer can reduce the liability to pay tax at the higher rate on dividends.

5. Other Changes

- All personal pension contributions should only receive tax relief at the standard rate of tax.
- Death Duty level should be set at £500,000.
- Pension Contributions made by an employer for any employee above £10,000 per annum, should be treated the same as a bonus and taxed at 90%.
- Payments in kind paid by an employer, should be valued and treated as income for that employee, unless it is for the better performance of his job – such as a Resident Caretaker may be provided with accommodation for the better performance of his job.

6. Pensions

- State Pensions should immediately receive a substantial increase.
- Most or many pensions increase annually in line with inflation as depicted by the Retail Price Index (RPI) but there are many items included in the RPI that do not or rarely apply to pensioners such as mortgages and high tech equipment. Therefore, an new Pensioner Retail Price Index (PRPI) should be created that would fairer reflect inflation as it would apply to a pensioner.

- State and other pensions should in future increase in accordance with the greater of the new Pensioner Retail Price Index or wage inflation whichever is the largest.
- Married Pensioner Couples should be able to combine or transfer their tax allowances between each other.
- The tax allowance reducer currently applied to pensioners with modest pensions over £21,000, should be increased to the same level as when the higher rate tax would be introduced.

7. Pensioners

- Pensioners should receive free dental treatment.
- Pensioners with savings are currently being unfairly used to subsidise mortgages and the Banks and Building Societies who are using the Bank of England as an excuse to build up their profits by paying no or very little interest on savings, which is disproportionately affecting pensioners. This must be stopped and fairness to pensioners introduced.