

25-Mar-10

Sir Christopher Kelly
The Committee on Standards in Public Life (Review of MPs' Expenses)
35 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BQ.

Your email: Inquiry@standards.x.gsi.gov.uk and/or
Public@standards.x.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Sir Christopher,

You have asked for input re. MPs' expenses.

In no order of priority, my submission is: -

- There must be no automatic re-selection of MPs. (If any MP wishes to stand for a subsequent term, they need to have proved their worth if and when they put themselves up for possible re-election as representatives of their constituents.)
- Recall if MP misbehaves. (To prevent any useless freeloaders from doing as they please until the next election.)
- All existing and prospective MPs shall openly declare all their interests whether in business; as members of the Masons; as associates/members/graduates of Common Purpose and any and all other groups to which they belong.
- MPs' salaries are adequate as they are at the moment, and shall be increased, annually, but only by the Sept. RPI figure (As per the increase in state pension.)
- MPs shall be able to claim only for out-of-pocket, fully justified, published and receipted expenses that are - provably - wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred for doing the job
- Only provable and necessary travel shall be charged to the taxpayer - at economy class rates.
- No taxpayer funding whatsoever for MPs' second homes. Instead, provide modest state-funded accommodation for those who can't commute to Westminster. (Thousands of people commute long distances on a daily basis. MPs should not be special cases.)
- No taxpayer funded travel for MPs' family members.
- No family members of any MP as employees.
- No "double-dipping" for anything.

- Total reform of current MPs' pension scheme. Change to money purchase / defined contribution scheme. Employer (taxpayer) contributions to align with average private sector employer contribution.
- No claiming the cost of food.
- Removal of subsidies for cheap booze and meals in the bars and restaurants in Westminster.
- Ban smoking in the bars in Westminster.
- Ban "outside" jobs of any description while an MP.
- Ban MPs from taking up any "outside" jobs associated with any post in govt. within two years of ceasing to be an MP.
- All MPs' income and benefits to be taxable - as they are for the rest of us.
- No Resettlement Grant if the voters kick them out, or if they are deselected, or if they are found to be involved in cheating, fraud, etc. Otherwise – make the amount payable comply with the same rules that apply to the rest of us who may have been made redundant.

In addition: -

- All MPs must be made fully cognisant of the fact that they are the employees of the people who elected them. They are not "special" people and cannot lord it over us.
- Parliamentary terms, and therefore general elections, should be fixed at 4 years.
- Constituency boundaries should be redefined and the number of MPs reduced, initially, to 500 with a longer-term target (within five years) of reducing the number to 300.
- Proportional representation should be introduced for all elections (Run-off or STV).

Yours most sincerely,

M J Schofield