

RECEIVED
20 MAY 2009

Tenterden,

11 May 2009.

Sir Christopher Kelly,
Chairman of the Committee for Standards in Public Life,
House of Commons,
Westminster.
London. SW1.

Dear Sir Christopher,

Members of Parliament expenses claims.

I understand you will very soon be chairing an inquiry into the current system of reimbursement of M.P.'s for expenses claimed in relation to their parliamentary duties at Westminster. I was for many years a member of a professional committee on ethics and codes of practice and the current furore has been of great interest to me.

I have written to Mr. D. Cameron, Leader of the Conservative Party with some suggestions on the way forward and I am enclosing a copy of this letter to you in the hope that you and your committee would find it useful and perhaps add to your discussions.

I would be happy to appear before your committee to discuss in greater detail some of the ideas expressed.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. M. Morgan.

COPY.

Tenterden,

11 May 2009.

Mr. D. Cameron,
Member of Parliament,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London.

Dear Mr. Cameron,

Members of Parliament expenses claims.

Over the past few weeks I have been giving some thought to the matter of how to support M.P's in such a way that they are able to carry out their duties at Westminster and at the same time live in reasonably acceptable circumstances. I am sure you have received many letters on this point but I would ask you to spare a few minutes to read my proposals.

1. After the 2012 Games are over we have a golden opportunity, with the building of the Olympic accommodation, that flats could be allocated to M.P's whose constituencies are more than 1 hour 30 mins travelling time from Parliament. These flats, now the property of the State will have some basic furniture and equipment. Any additional furniture or equipment will have to be paid for by the M.P. concerned. Any damage to the property or repairs and redecoration on vacation of the property will have to be paid for by the occupant. Occupancy will be restricted to the M.P. and his/her immediate family. No overnight stays of friends or extended family will be allowed. This accommodation will be provided rent free and the running costs associated with the accommodation would be borne by the State. Any M.P. who decides not to avail himself of this facility but needs accommodation in London is free to make his own arrangements but will not be entitled to any financial assistance.
2. The primary residence of all M.P's must be their constituency house. This should end the iniquitous practice of "flipping" and "churning".
3. M.P's who live within commuting distance of Westminster i.e. 1 hour and 30 mins will not be entitled to a flat in the Olympic village but could qualify for a London Weighting allowance of the same value as that paid to e.g. NHS staff. London and Greater London M.P's will, of course, not qualify for such accommodation.
4. M.P's residing in the flats could be given ONE free return ticket a week to their constituencies whilst Parliament is sitting.
5. All M.P's travel on official business will be at the standard class. If first class is chosen then the individual will have to pay for the extra cost.

I have discussed these points with several people and have received enthusiastic support. The electorate are crying out for a complete revamp of a system that has encouraged those M.P's who, at best, are either amoral or, at worst, corrupt to abuse the "rules" to an extent that has appalled so many in the electorate.

Finally, I would like to know how such blatant claims could be sanctioned when some of the items clearly could not be deemed to be in the pursuance of their duties. We need to have a close look at the people approving these claims.

These are broad outlines and I would be very happy to discuss with you in greater detail the measures urgently required to regain the respect that has been lost and reintroduce standards of morality in Parliament.

I shall be sending a copy of this letter to Sir Christopher Kelly.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. M. Morgan.