

The Review of Parliamentary Pay and Allowances

Research Paper 96/79

9 July 1996



The SSRB report on Parliamentary pay and allowances (Cm 3330) was published on Thursday 4 July, and the House of Commons will debate its relevant provisions on Wednesday 10 July. Existing Research Papers provide Members with briefing on Members' pay; the office costs allowance; 'Short Money'; and the current rates of the main Parliamentary pay and allowances schemes, and the SSRB report provides a wealth of relevant information. This Paper considers aspects of the overall issue relevant to the forthcoming debate, including statistical analyses of pay and allowances, and of Parliamentary business, but it does not examine Parliamentary pensions and related issues.

Barry K Winetrobe
Home Affairs Section

Robert Clements
Social & General Statistics Section

House of Commons Library

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Summary

How much is an MP worth? Who decides? Throughout the centuries there has been a profusion of partial, uncomfortable, embarrassing and often contradictory answers, but satisfactory and universally acceptable ones still remain undiscovered. That this is so is hardly surprising for such answers rest upon fundamental premises about politics, economics and society: political assumptions about the role and style of the representative and the nature of his workload; economic assumptions about the comparability of wages and causes of inflation; and societal assumptions about the relative status and rewards of different occupations. Unless or until agreement is reached upon these elemental matters, then, consensus over the correct remuneration for MPs will continue to elude parliamentarians.¹

This quote neatly sums up the difficulties inherent in consideration of the issue of Parliamentary pay and allowances. The issue of Members' (and ministers') pay, despite various attempts to provide linkage-based formulae, remains one of intense Parliamentary and public interest. This has been heightened by the Nolan and Jopling debates, insofar as they relate to the 'job' of a Member of Parliament, and its remuneration.

This Paper does not deal with the history and current levels of Members' pay (they are dealt with in other Research Papers) nor with the substantive issues of Nolan or Jopling (these are also considered in other Research Papers listed in the Bibliography). Rather this Paper seeks to explore a few of the other issues which have arisen, in particular, in recent discussion of the topic. The fact that there is no such thing as a 'job description' setting out the various tasks, the hours of work etc., makes a structured discussion fraught with difficulty, as the 'full-time/part-time' argument demonstrates.

The concept of remuneration, and its 'proper' level for a Parliamentarian, is briefly explored. Is the level of remuneration a factor in the quality and quantity of the 'pool' of candidates? Is it a factor in Members' decisions whether and when to leave the House (subject to the will of the electorate)? Can there be a rational calculation of the remuneration of a Parliamentarian? These questions demonstrate the difficulties involved in analysing this topic.

The issue of Ministers' pay is examined with particular reference to the present concept of the reduced Parliamentary salary. This Paper also provides some statistical information on Members' and Ministers' pay, and on the level of Parliamentary business.

¹ D Judge, "The politics of MPs pay", (1984) 37 *Parliamentary Affairs*, 59

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I The SSRB Review

A. Background

The terms of reference of the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) were set out by the Prime Minister in 1993 when its name was changed from the Top Salaries Review Body (TSRB). It is currently chaired by Sir Michael Perry. It will be seen that the issues of Parliamentary pay and allowances were included in its remit:²

Top Salaries Review Body

Mr. Wolfson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Top Salaries Review Body.

The Prime Minister: The name of the Top Salaries Review Body (TSRB) has been changed to the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB). At the same time the review body's terms of reference have been revised. Both these changes have been introduced at the review body's request, and have been agreed with it. The revised terms of reference are as follows:

"To advise the Prime Minister on the remuneration of holders of judicial office; senior civil servants, senior officers of the armed forces; and such other public appointments as may from time to time be specified.

The Prime Minister may also ask the Review Body to advise from time to time on the pay and pensions of Members of Parliament and their allowances; Peers' allowances; and on the pay, pensions and allowances of Ministers and others whose pay is determined by a Ministerial and other Salaries Order. The review body will make other recommendations as it sees fit:

in order that the level of remuneration for the groups covered by its remit is sufficient to ensure, over time, the recruitment and retention and motivation of suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities;

to ensure that, as appropriate, the remuneration for the remit groups relates coherently to that of their subordinates, encourages efficiency and effectiveness, and takes account of the different

management and organisational structures which may be in place from time to time;

to relate reward to performance where appropriate;

to maintain the confidence of those covered by the review body's remit that its recommendations have been properly and fairly determined; and

to ensure that the remuneration of those covered by the remit is consistent with the Government's equal opportunities policy.

In making recommendations, the review body shall consider any factors which the Government and other witnesses may draw to its attention. In particular it shall have regard to:

differences in terms and conditions of employment between the public and private sector and between the remit groups, taking account of relative job security and the value of benefits in kind;

changes in national pay systems, including flexibility and the reward of success; and job weight in differentiating the remuneration of particular posts; and

the need to maintain a broad linkage between the remuneration of the three main remit groups, while allowing sufficient flexibility to take account of the circumstances of each group.

The review body will take account of the evidence it receives about wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations."

² HC Deb vol 229 cc559-60W, 26.7.93 (emphasis added).

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On 20 January 1996 the Prime Minister has today written to Sir Michael Perry, the chairman of the Senior Salaries Review Body, in the following terms:

"As you know, changes in the structure of civil servants' pay mean that new arrangements need to be found for determining Members' pay from 1997 onwards.

I would be grateful if you and your colleagues on the Senior Salaries Review Body, under your standing terms of reference, undertake a comprehensive review, with the following remit.

The Senior Salaries Review Body is asked to undertake a comprehensive review of the level and structure of Parliamentary pay and allowances and to make recommendations for the future. The review should cover each of the following terms:

- (i) the salary of Members of the House of Commons;
- (ii) the salaries of Ministers and other office-holders;

In a written answer of 4 July the Prime Minister announced the publication of the Report:⁴

The Prime Minister: The Government have now considered report No 38 from the Senior Salaries Review Body on parliamentary pay and allowances. The Government are grateful to the review body for undertaking this complex remit so promptly. The report is being published today as Command Paper 3330 and copies are available from the Vote Office.

Following representations made during the Government's consultations with other parties on the report, the Government will table motions to allow the House to consider whether it wishes to

implement the recommendations of the report in full.

(iv) the severance pay and pension arrangements for MPs and Ministers;

(v) the rates of Peers, expenses allowances and the Secretarial Allowance for Ministers and other paid office-holders in the House of Lords; and

(iv) a linkage to provide the basis for annual uprating in future years without the need for Parliamentary decision.'

I realise that such a review will be time consuming and needs to be fitted in with your other work. Nonetheless, I would be grateful if it could be completed in time for you to make recommendations, if at all possible, by the end of June."

implement the recommendations of the report in full.

The Government themselves, however, are clear that the recommended increases for Members' and Ministers' pay are too high and that the motions to give these effect should not be passed in current circumstances. They will therefore oppose these motions and will table motions to bring into effect an increase in the salary of a Back-Bench Member from £34,085 to £35,108, that is by 3 per cent., with effect from 1 July 1996, and for similar increases in the pay of Ministers and other office

³ HC Deb vol 271 cc101-2W, 6.2.96

⁴ HC Deb vol 280 cc505-6W, 4.7.96

holders. The Government will also table motions to implement the report's recommendation that further increases should take effect from 1 April each year and should be linked to movements in senior civil service pay bands.

He amplified his views during Questions that day: [c.1048]

As for the report that will be published this afternoon, let me say first to the hon. Gentleman that it is worth remembering precisely why the review was set up. It was for two reasons essentially: first, it was necessary to devise a new formula for determining Members' pay as the old one had broken down and, secondly, 300 Members of the House, of whom 200 were Labour Members, had called for such a review not the hon. Gentleman, I concede that in a motion before the House.

Following the consultation that I have had with leaders of other political parties, it is clear that they do not wish to express a view and that they believe that it is a matter for the House as a whole to decide. The Cabinet decided this morning to offer the House an opportunity to vote for the recommendations as they stood, but the Government will be recommending and also voting for restraint.

B. Principles of the SSRB Review

What follows are some of the main principles and facts which appear to have influenced the SSRB in the conduct of its review, as derived from its Report and which amplify the Report's summary. The order follows that of the Report and is not intended to reflect any hierarchy of importance.

1. Parliamentary salaries

- The *accumulated 'backlog'* in Parliamentary pay following Parliament's voluntary restraint in refusing the full salary recommended in 1983 by the TSRB has remained unaddressed [*Report, Cm 3330-I, paras 22-23.*]
- The *short time* in which to carry out the present review, meant that "it has not been possible to make firm recommendations relating to some of the issues which have arisen," and further consideration with those involved is required [*para 26*]
- The *position of the Government*:

25. We received evidence from the Government covering the history and current status of the full range of Parliamentary pay and allowances. The Government also submitted general evidence on the issue of affordability, although it made no specific observations in relation to this particular review. If, for example, the Government wishes to constrain the movement of Parliamentary pay by application of the same criteria it has attached to other public sector pay reviews, it has not said so.

- *General principles:*

28. We have applied the following general principles to the determination of pay levels:

- (i) pay should not be so low as to deter suitable candidates or so high as to make pay the primary attraction of the job;
- (ii) pay should reflect levels of responsibility rather than workload;
- (iii) whereas those with outside interests should not be deterred from entering Parliament, those who choose to make Parliament a full-time career should be adequately rewarded to reflect their responsibilities;
- (iv) pay should not be augmented in an attempt to compensate MPs for job insecurity, which is not unique to MPs;
- (v) the basic Parliamentary salary should continue to be the same for all MPs;
- (vi) there should be no pay progression linked to length of service;
- (vii) a clear distinction must be made between salary and reimbursement of expenses.

- The *workload* of conscientious MPs is heavy, but this is not unique [*para 30*].
- Parliamentary salaries "cannot be set by reference to a recognisable market rate" or on "straightforward recruitment and retention" grounds [*para 30*].
- "Like the Nolan Committee, we recognise that outside experience may well be of value to the House; but those who choose to make Parliament a full-time occupation should be adequately rewarded to reflect their responsibilities. MPs' pay should not be set to 'compensate' for any perceived loss of outside incomes" [*para 31*].
- Comparison should not be made with the earnings of constituents and the like; "...of all the factors mentioned, the relative responsibilities of an MP should carry most weight" [*para 32*].
- Comparators "should be in the public sector/professional arena: head teachers, police superintendents, doctors, civil servants..." whose salaries "fall in a range between £38,000 and the mid-£50,000s" [*para 33*].
- SSRB's consultants, Hay, "found that the MP's job had not changed substantially since 1983". [ie the last major review, Cmnd 8881]. "[W]e saw no reason to change the system whereby basic Parliamentary pay is the same for all MPs... For constitutional and practical reasons we have discounted the possibility of performance-related pay for MPs, whatever its utility may be elsewhere." [*para 34*].
- While "there are always caveats attached to" international comparison exercises,

".... a salary in the lower £40,000s would place the United Kingdom MPs around the international average in terms of purchasing power parity..." [para 35].

- "However the result [of the review] is arrived at, it should be generally perceived as reasonable and fair" [para 36].
- If the 1983 TSRB recommendation of £19,000 been implemented, and uprated since then by the actual percentage increases, the current salary would be some £42,300, instead of £34,085 [para 36].
- The SSRB "saw no reason to alter" the 'duality rate' of one-third salary for MEPs who are also MPs [para 38].
- While a pay scale increasing by reference to time served in the House "has the advantage of being simple to administer, and reflects repeated success in elections, it is difficult to justify since it rewards length of service rather than increased responsibility." It contradicts the general move away from service-related increments. "We have therefore concluded that length of service should not be a factor in determining pay" [para 39].
- As the House has its own procedures for appointments to chairs of committees and as "reform of the Committee structure is under discussion in the House... we do no consider it appropriate to make firm recommendation at this stage" [para 41].

2. Ministerial etc., salaries

- "We consider that since pay should be set to reflect responsibility levels, and a Minister retains the full responsibilities of an MP, there is no reason to abate the Parliamentary salary of Ministers when they take office" [para 43].
- "We were impressed by the broad consensus in oral and written evidence that Ministerial posts, and particularly those of Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister, were underpaid" [para 44].
- For Commons Ministers of State and Parliamentary Under Secretaries "payment of the full Parliamentary salary, added to the present Ministerial salary, would produce a total salary which we believe to be broadly appropriate" [para 45].
- "The practice of self-imposed restraints on the salary of senior Ministers has compressed differentials over the years and we believe that some additional recognition of the job weight of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers is long overdue" [para 47].
- "We consider it in the public interest that the status and uniquely heavy

responsibilities of the Prime Ministerial office should not be undervalued" [*para 48*].

- "The salaries of Cabinet Ministers should be set to reflect similar considerations" [*para 49*].
- "We recommend that the Speaker's office-holder's salary be set at.... the same level as that of Cabinet Ministers in the Commons" [*para 50*].
- "For the present, we confine ourselves to maintaining" the differential between the Leader of the Opposition's office-holder's salary and that of a Cabinet Minister [*para 51*].
- The question of Whips' salaries (other than the Chief Whips and Government Deputy Chief Whips) was the subject of conflicting evidence and would be further considered "in close consultation with the relevant authorities" [*paras 52-3*].
- There was no evidence of any changes needed in the salaries of other Commons office-holders [*para 54*].
- Similar general principles should apply to the review of Lords Ministers, the main determinant being responsibilities. No equivalent of a Parliamentary salary should be awarded. Lords Ministers "should be treated essentially in the same way" as Commons Ministers, "but we accept the historical argument for the Ministerial salary remaining higher" [*paras 57-8*].
- The relativities between junior Lords and Commons Ministers should be examined in more detail [*para 59*].
- "We have received no evidence to suggest that any fundamental change in the Lord Chancellor's salary is necessary," and the 1991 statutory differential between it and the Lord Chief Justice's salary should be restored in real terms" [*para 61*].
- "We see no reason to disturb" the historical system of salaries for the Law Officers [*para 62*].

3. Implementation and uprating

- *Timing* "We are mindful of the undesirability of retrospective increases, both in principle and practice. We therefore do not recommend backdating" [*para 63*].
- "We do believe, however, that our recommendations on Parliamentary salaries should be implemented as soon as possible, and not be delayed until January as is customary" [*para 64*].

- Because Parliamentary salaries should be determined by reference to responsibilities, "to base the uprating of these salaries on pay increases for senior civil servants' which included individual performance awards would create distortions" [*para 68*].
- *Uprating* should: [*para 70*]
 - (i) be based on timely information.
 - (ii) avoid MPs' pay leading, or unduly lagging behind, developments elsewhere;
 - (iii) be simple, objective and transparent; and
 - (iv) be operable over the longer term.
- "We do not favour the use of an index...[I]t would not be acceptable to give MPs protection through automatic linking of their pay to an index of, for example, earnings or prices, when this is not generally available to others" [*para 71*].
- The use of data based on actual pay movements of other workgroups "has attractions" but all such approaches have disadvantages: "in particular, it is difficult to measure and compare pay settlements given the increasing use of merit awards, profit-related pay, and employee share schemes" [*para 72*].
- "The evidence we received overwhelmingly favoured a link to the public sector generally, or to a Review Body remit group," especially a Civil Service link [*para 74*].
- "The job of MP carries a strong public service ethos, and we consider that the link should be with the Senior Civil Service. The importance of objectivity, transparency and simplicity has led us to conclude that this remit group, whose pay is based on the recommendations of SSRB, would provide the best base". The SSRB input "would ensure that recommendations on Parliamentary salary levels were reached in a fair and equitable way" [*para 75*].
- MPs' pay awards must not be affected by performance pay awarded to individual civil servants [*para 76*].
- "Experience has shown that no approach to uprating linked to external comparators can guarantee the 'right' level of pay indefinitely; nor can it take account of changing relative responsibilities". There should be SSRB reviews at regular intervals, every three years starting in 2000 [*para 77*].
- SSRB agreed that the general principle for the future "once the correct level has been set" is for Ministerial salaries "to be dealt with on exactly the same basis as that of MPs" [*para 78*].

- If salaries are set initially as recommended, "this automatic uprating mechanism should not result in Parliamentary salaries leading, or unduly lagging behind, general pay changes elsewhere in the public sector," but if the initial recommendations are not implemented "the uprating mechanism will not preserve an appropriate level" [para 79].
- "To avoid undesirable leads and lags for Parliament in relation to other sectors of the public service" uprating should be from 1 April, starting in 1997 [para 80].

4. *Members allowances*

- "Allowances are provided to meet expenditure incurred on Parliamentary duties". The general principles applicable to all allowances are: [para 91]
 - (i) allowances are a reimbursement of expenditure actually incurred in connection with Parliamentary duties,
 - (ii) allowances are entirely distinct from Parliamentary salaries. The reimbursement of expenditure on staffing, and equipping MPs' offices is *not* an addition to their salary, and should not be represented as such;
 - (iii) while the maximum level of an allowance should be sufficient to cover costs likely to be incurred by MPs in order to undertake their duties efficiently, allowances are paid from the public purse and should only cover essential and reasonable expenditure;
 - (iv) MPs should be clearly accountable for claims against their allowances.
- SSRB therefore considered: [para 92]
 - (i) the level of the allowance: whether the maximum is sufficient to meet expenditure properly incurred by the MP, but limited to what we believe to be reasonable.
 - (ii) the structure of the allowance: whether the purpose of the allowance is sufficiently clear and focused, and the claims against the allowance are appropriately supported.
- 'RPI' uprating "has the strength of simplicity and transparency, and is an appropriate measure for allowances designed to meet actual costs" [para 93].
- *Office costs allowance*: "... it is clear that the office support needs of the majority of MPs have increased substantially in recent years. The demands placed on MPs by their constituencies in particular have increased sharply. The [OCA] has rightly been increased since the early 1990s over and above the movement of the Retail Price Index to reflect this increased need." [para 97].
- Office costs and equipment accounts for about 25% of the OCA. "[C]entrally provided office accommodation in Westminster has improved considerably, [and]

as central provision improves, the call on the [OCA] for office equipment diminishes. We conclude that this element of the allowance is set at an appropriate level" [para 98].

- "Centralised provision of equipment is an important and welcome trend. It would be a considerable advantage to MPs if appropriate office equipment were provided on request in their Westminster offices," such as a fax and personal computer. SSRB will consult with House authorities on this matter [para 99].
- "From the evidence as a whole, we accept that the staffing element of the Office Costs Allowance [c75%] is too constrained" [para 101].
- While the OCA was "adequate for the majority of MPs", it would not meet staff costs of "a small number of MPs" representing constituencies "where there are particularly high levels of need. These constituencies make significantly greater demands on their MP. They generate extremely heavy constituency case work.... We therefore consider that there is a good case for making available an Exceptional Needs Allowance..." [para 102].
- The details of an ENA, including administrative procedures and accountability mechanisms, "would have to be agreed with the Parliamentary Parties and House authorities". SSRB should "work with the parties and relevant House authorities to agree whether such an allowance should be established..." [para 103].
- "So long as MPs' staff have a proper employment contract, and are paid direct from the Fees Office... [employment of Members' family] should not undermine the accountability of the allowance. We would not wish to restrict MPs' freedom in this matter" [para 105].
- SSRB had "concerns about the transparency" of the OCA. "We therefore believe that there is a strong case for increased clarity in the structure of this allowance" [para 106].
- "The flexibility in the present system does enable MPs to make optimum use of the current level of allowance. However, against the efficiency gains which can be made by individual MPs must be set the intrinsic inefficiencies of the current system", with some 650 employers. Many MPs find the task of being an employer a particular burden and distraction from Parliamentary and constituency duties. It often leaves to MPs the often invidious decision of how to trade off the conflicting demands of staff needs (including higher wages and better terms and conditions) and the need for more modern equipment" [para 109].

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- "We therefore believe that on grounds of transparency and efficiency there is a very strong case for removing staff costs from the allowance system" [*para 110*].
- SSRB propose to consult with Parliamentary Parties and relevant House authorities "to agree an up-to-date system.... which meets the needs of MPs and staff, and which aims to maintain a sensible level of flexibility, while at all times keeping cost to the public purse to the minimum" [*para 111*].
- *Additional Costs Allowance*: no representations had been received that the level was inappropriate: Most MPs appear to find the level adequate" [p.114].
- The ACA "has the benefit of simplicity. Any alteration in structure... would unnecessarily complicate a limited allowance designed to meet a very wide variety of needs" [*para 115*].
- *London Supplement*: it should not be abolished for MPs but "we see no case for increasing it" [*para 117*].
- *Motor mileage allowance*: "... the highest rate of the allowance is indeed over-generous in comparison with mileage allowance rates elsewhere... On balance we believe that, for simplicity and fairness, and to minimise transitional complexity, a single mileage rate at the current middle band would adequately compensate MPs for expenditure on car usage on Parliamentary business" [*para 121*].
- While there is no argument for altering the structure of the allowance on transparency grounds "there is a case, however, for improved accountability.... It is therefore important to ensure that there are tight and effective controls of a fully vouched claims system. We are not persuaded that this is currently the case" [*para 122*].
- *Travel warrants*: The system is "effective and appropriate" and "should be maintained unaltered" [*para 123*].
- *Family travel concessions*: There was no evidence that this allowance is "inappropriate" [*para 125*].
- *Staff travel concessions*: The allowance was "adequate", and may even become, with increased use of new technology, less necessary [*para 127*].
- *Winding up allowance*: SSRB had received no evidence that it was inadequate, but it would have to be reviewed in the light of any changes to the OCA on which it was based [*para 129*].
- *Up-rating* as recommended should be given effect from 1 April 1997, and by RPI levels thereafter [*para 130*].

5. Peers' allowances

- Evidence received was "overwhelmingly in support of the current arrangements", especially their simplicity. "Eligibility was simply defined, and the levels were thought to be modest but on the whole adequate". They did meet the needs of the majority, though not of a number of very active Peers, "and the compromise that the system represented was acceptable to the House" [*para 133*].
- SSRB "concluded that on the whole the level of Peers' allowances are appropriate," and that there is a real difficulty in meeting "the expenses of the very active Peers, especially on the Front Bench, from the existing system. Any such change "would require constitutional change or at least changes to central provision of funds" [*para 134*].
- Some specific issues can be dealt with within the existing system [*para 135*].
- A Consolidated Allowance would ameliorate problems of Peers not being able to claim the subsistence allowance while on Parliamentary business away from Westminster, especially for those (nearly 300) who attended for more than 100 days per session. "It seems to us that it would be appropriate for these very active Peers to be allowed to claim their allowance as a lump sum in advance...." [*para 138*].
- SSRB considered it reasonable for Peers to claim spouses' travel expenses twice per session [*para 140*].
- *Opposition and Crossbench Peers'* expenses for research and organisational support "are not fully met from individual Peers' allowances". [*para 141*].
- *Implementation* should remain generally at 1 August, starting with 1996, and increases in line with the RPI [*para 146*].
- '*Short Money*': some Peers' expenditure is met from 'Short Money', and, although not within SSRB's remit, it has been examined [*para 142*].
- Short Money is based solely on Commons elections votes and seats and therefore "intrinsicly difficult for the Lords". The proportion of Liberal Democrats is greater in the Lords, and the Crossbenchers are not a qualifying Party [*para 144*].
- SSRB concluded:

It is not for us to determine how Parties deploy their Short Money. We observe however that Opposition Spokesmen in the Lords cannot meet all their legitimate expenses from the allowance system alone. To provide from central resources a small amount of funding for each Opposition grouping in the Lords for research and secretarial support would seem to us a very sensible step forward.

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We are unable to make recommendations on this as it is outside our remit.

II Members' Pay

A. Introduction

The main principles behind the issue of Parliamentary remuneration were examined in Research Paper 93/98. This section simply seeks to explore a number of current themes in the continuing debate. There can be no definite answer to the 'rate for the job' question for Members of Parliament, but it can be seen that different emphases appear over time, partly as a reaction to external as well as internal Parliamentary factors. The introduction of payment itself, for example, in the early 20th century, for example, was a recognition of the changing social profile of the House as a result of the growing democratisation of the British political process.

Some of the major factors that influence Members' pay appear to be:

- (i) *self-regulation*: The fact that Members' determine their own financial arrangements (influenced or even led by the Government of the day, to a greater or lesser extent) has conflicting consequences. While some sections of the media and the public will be convinced that some Members in a Parliament will succumb to the temptation to award themselves generous remuneration packages, Members may regard public opinion as a strong incentive to go in the opposite direction and hold down their pay and allowances below a level that they may feel objectively justifiable. This could be described, in part, in constitutional terms, as the effects of public accountability, and a recent general example may be the Nolan episode.⁵
- (ii) *constitutional perspective*: The unique position of Members, of which self-regulation is a crucial part, has other consequences. At times, it may be felt that the usual forms of financial control and criteria are either difficult to apply in the normal way or not applicable at all. Reports on Members' pay and allowances frequently comment on the need to improve internal administrative control of Parliamentary finance, such as allowances and expenses claims. See, for example, the current SSRB report's concerns about the accountability and transparency of the Office Costs Allowance and Motor Mileage Allowances.⁶ Another aspect, which has been raised from time to time recently, both in the media and in Parliament, is the issue of assessment of performance or workload related to salary. SSRB concluded that "for constitutional and practical reasons we have discounted the possibility of performance-related pay for MPs whatever its utility may be elsewhere."⁷

⁵ See Research Papers 95/96, 95/109 and 95/118

⁶ Cm 3330 paras 104-111 and 122 respectively

⁷ para 34

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- (iii) *'setting an example'*: Related to general aspect of public opinion (and, perhaps to recent concerns over 'top people's pay', especially in the privatised utility companies) is the notion that the public sector in general, and Parliament and Government in particular, should set an example in pay restraint. Government incomes policies, statutory or otherwise, are generally applied to some degree to Ministers and Parliamentarians, a vivid recent example of which was the 1993 'freeze' agreed to by the House on 25 November 1992.⁸
- (iv) *'public service'*: An enduring theme, though perhaps of less importance in recent years, is the idea that the vocational element of public service, including membership of the House of Common, means that it should not be remunerated simply on 'private sector' criteria. Members are assumed in modern times not to enter Parliament for financial reward, and since the introduction of salaries, the element of 'compensation' - enabling people to enter and remain in the House - has appeared to have taken priority over the concept of financial reward. Thus an acceptable Parliamentary pay system is perhaps one that should provide neither a financial incentive or disincentive to Members and potential Members.
- (v) *balance between pay and allowances*: The modern system which provides Members with a salary and also with allowances to enable them to carry out their Parliamentary duties can be open to public misinterpretation, as is seen with frequent media practice of aggregating salary and allowances (usually based on their maxima) to produce claims of Members' 'earning' up to, or even over, £100,000 at present. Employment of family members as paid secretaries or research assistants, for example, is sometimes interpreted as 'diverting' allowances into Members' pockets⁹, or the mileage allowance can be seen as 'topping up' Members salary.¹⁰ Members themselves have expressed concern at the balance between pay and allowances. Edward du Cann in the July 1979 pay debate, for example, was worried that if the remuneration of Members of Parliament is kept artificially low "the allowances become more significant... [F]or a long time I thought it unsatisfactory that people in salaried employment in industry - and now, apparently, in the House - should be preoccupied with allowances. It is an insidious, spreading thing. It is much better if Members of Parliament and those outside insist on straightforwardness in matters of remuneration."¹¹
- (vi) *retention of Members*: One argument for increased remuneration is that it would encourage more Members to remain in the the House for longer in order that Parliament will benefit from their Parliamentary and political experience. This 'wise elders' argument has tended to be applied to former Ministers, but could also apply to those with public and Parliamentary service on select committees, for example. It is claimed that too many former Ministers and other senior Members (including

⁸ HC Deb vol 214 cc.884-929. See section 4 of Research Paper 93/98

⁹ See the SSRB's consideration of this point, para 105

¹⁰ See paras 118-121

¹¹ HC Deb vol 970 c.497, 11.7.79

shadow ministers) are choosing to leave after leaving ministerial or other relevant office. There are, on the other hand, many examples of senior Members, many of whom have been Ministers at some stage of their Parliamentary career, taking an active part in the work of the House, both in the Chamber and in committees. There will also inevitably be some Members with perhaps relatively brief ministerial careers but with safe seats, who may remain in the House for a number of Parliaments, but without taking a very active part in proceedings.

B. Full-time MPs?¹²

The argument about whether MPs are, or should be, full-time or part-time parliamentarians can be complicated by the meaning of these terms. There is, for example, often an overt or implied accusation of 'amateurism' in the use by some of the term 'part-time', or of 'professionalism', in a derogatory sense, in the use of 'full-time'. These terms can be, and have been, used to describe both the content of the 'job' and the way in which Members do the 'job'.

The role of an MP has gradually taken on more of a full time aspect during the twentieth century. The increasing business in the Commons; the development of the Select Committee system; increasing specialisation, and the growing burden of constituency work have all contributed to the phenomenon. Peter Riddell¹³ has also argued that most MPs now commit themselves to politics in their youth and the Commons has become central to the ambitions of a new generation of politicians, sometimes spending their early working life as Members' assistants. The increasing professionalisation of politics has not been accompanied by an official reconsideration of the role of a Member, or of the level of remuneration. Many of the MPs and ex-Ministers who gave evidence to Nolan were concerned that MPs should not become professional politicians, citing the value of outside interests and experience gained before entering the House. However the trend towards career politicians documented by Riddell seems unlikely to be reversed and Nolan can be seen as the first major attempt to address the ethical consequences since the Register of Members' Interests was set up in 1975.

What is meant by a 'full-time' Member? The implication of the Nolan analysis appears to be that Members should be able to pursue some activity, paid or otherwise - perhaps the continuation of their previous occupation - so long as it does not conflict with Members' primary duty to their country and their constituents¹⁴ or the code of conduct, including the seven general principles of public life.¹⁵ Some people will define 'full-time' as meaning that Members should devote themselves, in their working hours, solely and wholly to their work

¹² This section is derived from Research Paper 95/62, pp35-7.

¹³ in *Honest Opportunism* (1993)

¹⁴ See the 'general principles' section of the draft code of conduct for MPs on p39 of the Report, Cm 2850

¹⁵ p.14

as Members of Parliament. If they undertake any significant outside activity or employment, they cannot be, on this definition, full-time and are therefore described as part-time. On the other hand other people will regard MPs as truly 'part-time' only if they are undertaking some activity not regarded as being related to their work as Members during time when they 'could' or 'should' be working as Members.¹⁶

It may be that these two points of view are really saying the same thing, if from opposite ends of the argument. Assuming that few would seriously advocate that MPs should *actively* be doing the job of an MP 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, (other than the idea in the minds of some constituents, perhaps, of Members always being 'on call') there must be some time periods which are Members' own 'free time' in which they, like any other members of society, may undertake activities, unremunerated or not, which may or may not have any relation to their main occupation. Therefore the issues may really be the extent of that free time, and the *appropriateness* of the activities, especially paid activities, that are undertaken in that time and in 'working time'.

How full-time is full-time? This cannot be answered with any certainty,¹⁷ as Members of Parliament do not, of course, have any sort of uniform job description setting out the range of tasks that a Member is expected to do, or the working hours in which they should be done. Constituents' views of these matters can vary considerably and also be contradictory, especially the advent of the televising of Parliament. They will often ask, for example, why Members are not seen to be present in the Chamber often enough, but when they do see Members in the Chamber they may well ask why they are spending so much time sitting 'doing nothing' when they should be elsewhere (committees, constituency) 'doing something'. The trend since the War is certainly that the work of a Member is not done only at Westminster, but also in the constituency, especially in the growing 'constituency welfare officer' role, with regular 'surgeries'/advice services. Constituents may regard MPs as not truly 'full-time' if they are seen to be spending a significant amount of time (especially if during 'working hours', eg hours when the House is sitting) on work or other activities, paid or otherwise, regarded as unrelated to their Parliamentary duties.

This leads on to the appropriateness of such activities. Two distinct categories can be identified. One is what concerns the Nolan Committee that is, the political lobbying/consultancy/advice function; work, generally paid, directly or otherwise, related to Members' Parliamentary duties or their status as Members of Parliament, with all the access and influence in the legislative/governmental/policy networks that that position may bring. The other category is work unrelated, or not obviously related, to a Member's position as a Member of Parliament. This category may be the continuation of an occupation held prior

¹⁶ Some Members say that they combine a 'full-time' career at Westminster with other, external activities in what would be, for many other people, their leisure hours

¹⁷ although surveys by TSRB/SSRB and others provide some insights

to election to the House, or one taken up while a Member. The latter may become a issue if the paid activity arose *directly or indirectly out of* a Member's position or celebrity, although if it is regarded as acceptable and valuable for Members to bring outside experience to Parliament, then, in principle, the converse should apply, subject to the ethical principles enunciated by Nolan. Such work may be media appearances; authorship of articles or books, lecture tours and so on (although these activities could also have been part of a Member's prior occupation).

The nature of unrelated occupations, especially those often regarded by commentators historically as appropriate and advantageous for Members, tend, not unnaturally, to be those which can be held in conjunction with the job of an MP. Therefore the professions or forms of self-employment are usually cited, rather than occupations which may require regular attendance during set working hours, as is common in office, shop or factory work, or indeed work at home or as a carer. The Nolan Report not only wished to see Members "*from a wide variety of backgrounds*" but thought it "*desirable for the House of Commons to contain Members with a wide variety of continuing outside interests*".¹⁸

The 1946 select committee on Members' expenses made the following significant point:¹⁹

In assessing the sum which should be paid to a Member in addition to his expenses, Your Committee have not regarded it as a professional salary. Though a Member may be called upon to devote a great deal of time to the business of the House, he has complete freedom to allot his time between his parliamentary duties, either at Westminster or in his constituency, and his personal affairs. It would be most unwise to take this freedom from him by paying such a figure as would unequivocally demand his full time in return, The sum must, however, suffice to enable him "to maintain himself comfortably and honourably, but not luxuriously" while a Member of the House. These are the words used by the late Earl Lloyd-George, of Dwyfor when he introduced payment of Members in 1911, and Your Committee feel that they still express the wishes of the House.

The 1954 select committee on Members' expenses also considered the issue of combining outside employment with membership of the House.²⁰

20. Moreover, in the House, in the constituency, and in affairs in the country generally, the activities, political and social, of Members have increased enormously, thereby making it increasingly difficult to combine outside work with Membership of the House of Commons. There are today a number of employments from which a Member would be required to resign on his election to Parliament. Even in the professions it is difficult for a Member to perform his work efficiently or adequately unless he can rely on partners or a competent staff. It is obviously impossible for a Member to continue in full-time employment as a school teacher, engine miner, railwayman or in any executive or managerial position which requires his

¹⁸ Para 2.20 and 2.19, emphasis added

¹⁹ HC 93-I, 1945-46, March 1946, para 7 (extract)

²⁰ HC 72, 1953-54, Feb 1954, para 20.

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constant attendance at works, factory, or office, especially out of London. Further, some firms and companies are reluctant to employ a Member of Parliament even for part time. Some Members can, however, add to the income by directorships, by journalistic work, broadcasting, lecturing, consultative work, advising and similar tasks, which do not call for long absences from the House, and some are in receipt of payments made to them as officials of organisations.

Its report was clear that the then 'expenses' payment of £1,000pa was insufficient, partly for the following reasons:

53. To maintain themselves and their families reasonably, Members have to have an additional income from some other source, or savings, or capital upon which to draw. Your Committee appreciate that there are many Members who either have private resources or are able in some way to combine their Parliamentary duties with other paid work. On the other hand, there is the inescapable fact there are many Members who are very largely, or, indeed, entirely dependent upon the, payment of the £1,000 made to them as Members.

54. In the considered judgment of Your Committee, the payment made to Members of Parliament should be of such an amount as to enable men and women from all walks of life to enter this field of public service without finding the financial sacrifice for themselves and their families too great. Your Committee believe that the enduring strength and authority of Parliament depends upon the quality of its Members. Qualities of temperament, character ability and experience are needed. The House of Commons must also be representative of the people, and should not be drawn from certain sections only; the field of choice should be wide. Few would support the idea of a House of Commons composed principally of full-time politicians, in the sense of men and women cut off from any practical share in the work of the nation. It would be no less damaging to the country if the House were to become a place where Members could not give of their best because of a dominating need to escape from financial pressure.

Opening a debate on the adjournment on 13 May 1954 on the report, Robert Mellish (Labour) made the following remarks:²¹

On the question of part-time employment, I would point out that we are a broad section of the community. For example, we have miners here. If there are to be facilities for part-time work for all hon. Members, is the Minister of Works to do something about making a coalmine in Parliament Square? We might have some pithead baths behind Mr. Speaker's Chair. The suggestion is as ludicrous as that. How can one expect a middle-aged miner, who has come into the House on the expression of good will of his people, to follow that employment part-time? The truth is that this House to a very large extent will have to rely on many who in fact give their full time to the House. I am not anxious to get involved in that argument, but that is my personal opinion. It may be that a committee of the future will show how part-time could be done, but we should leave it to that committee and not get bogged down on that question when considering what we should do today.

²¹ HC Deb vol 527 c1444, 13.5.54.

William Deedes (Conservative) took up the point:²²

Since this is a matter of personal opinion, and since personal opinion is inseparable from personal circumstances, I think it is a proper preliminary to declare my interest; and, as one, of the professional journalists in the House, I think it is right to admit that among those in the House who seek to combine Parliamentary and professional work, the journalist may be counted among the more fortunate. It is very easy to declare, as a matter of principle, that all back benchers should have interests outside the House, if one happens to be fortunate enough to be able to pursue them ; but I most certainly do not say that, nor do I imply it, as a universal rule.

It seems to me that it is healthy that there should be a number of hon. Members here with outside interests, but it is not necessary, nor even desirable, that all should have outside interests. I take the point which the hon. Member for Bermondsey made about the reliance which we put on those Members who can give the whole of their time to the service of this House, particularly in morning Committees, with which we are all acquainted. I am always sorry to hear, and I emphatically reject, the line of those people who say that it is up to Members who come to this place to fend for themselves and provide for themselves or get out. I reject that, and I think I speak for the majority of the House in doing so.

Most of this question centres around those who are wholly, or almost wholly, dependent upon their Parliamentary salaries, and whether or not that salary is adequate to meet their requirements and the proper execution of their duty.

The Leader of the Opposition, Clement Attlee, regarded himself as a full-time Member:²³

It is important that we should have if not a good conceit of our individual selves, at least a good conceit of us collectively in this House. We know that our work is important. It is undoubtedly true that the work has increased very much even since I have been in the House. I am one of those who might be called full-time Members of Parliament. I believe that we want a mixture of Members with plenty of outside experience, but we do have a number of Members who give up their whole time to this work. Many of them get no limelight at all. I do not think that the general public realise that Members who are working here full time, for the money they get, often work 16 hours a day. For the last 25 years I have worked on an average 16 hours a day, and sometimes 17 hours, in this House, and it is fairly heavy work.

Later that month, the Labour MP, George Thomas, moving a motion, *inter alia*, to implement a rise of £500pa for Members, said that "some people suggest that, after all, our duty here is part-time. It is part-time in some ways for some people because it is full-time for others", and continued, referring in particular to duty on standing committees:²⁴

These Committees demand the time and the ability of hon. Members. Hon. Members who served on the Committee of the Mines and Quarries Bill have already indicated to the House that some of my hon. Friends who were miners brought to that Committee experience with

²² c1450.

²³ c1480.

²⁴ HC Deb vol 528 c36, 37, 24.5.54.

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which the best universities in the country could not have provided them-experience which was invaluable to the House.

Are we to say to such people that they must continue to endure the hardship which is undoubtedly theirs simply because we do not want to deal with this question on the basis that some hon. Members are able to take up other occupations and be hon. Members here? As the late Mr. Lees-Smith once said, Parliament works on the basis that a proportion of its hon. Members will not take up other employment. That is the only basis on which we can run our Standing Committees.

This is the House of Commons-the House of the common people of the realm. Unless we take action by following, the recommendation of the Select Committee we shall, so far as the House is concerned, be turning back the clock. We shall be giving notice that only those people with private incomes need stand for Parliament. We shall be saying that working people need never come here. I was a schoolmaster previously, but those of us who come from humble walks of life know that, financially, we should be better off outside than we are in this House.

The Lawrence Committee considered the issue of full-time Members as part of its examination of the principles behind Members' remuneration. It adopted to some extent the thinking behind Lloyd George's 1911 statements, by considering the notion of Members (or potential Members) "who have neither the private means *nor the opportunity of earnings outside Parliament* which will enable them to assume this form of political life."²⁵ The Report continued:

31. The first difficulty involves the question whether the salary should be regarded as recognition of full-time or part-time service. This question has never received any authoritative answer in the various recommendations which have been made from time to time on the subject of the salary. Our questionnaire to Members of the House specifically included this question (see Appendix A to this Report). The replies did not provide a conclusive answer. Many were to the effect that in present conditions, whatever may have been the case in the past, the salary should be regarded as a recognition of full-time service. On the other hand a substantial number of replies disclosed a firm belief that the House would suffer considerably if the quality of its work if it consisted entirely of "full-time professional politicians " and thus lost the benefit of the counsel of those Members who spend some part of their time actively engaged in professions and occupations outside the House. It was frequently said that the strength of the House lay in its great variety of membership and that continuous contact with the outside world on the part of a substantial number of Member contributed greatly to the reality of its debates.

32. It is unnecessary for the purposes of our review that we should express any opinion on this question. It is enough that we should consider and take into account the pertinent and relevant facts. These are that the House of Commons contains and no doubt will continue to contain not only a number of Members who have the opportunity of supplementing their parliamentary salary by earnings made outside the House but also a number (and possibly a growing number) of those who simply cannot do so. The possibility of making such earnings

²⁵ *Report of the Committee on the remuneration of Ministers and Members of Parliament*, Cmnd 2516, Nov 1964, para 29 (emphasis added).

varies greatly from Member to Member, being dependent largely on the nature of their training, skills and previous occupations. In some cases these are of a nature which precludes altogether the opportunity of making any outside earnings. As has often been observed before, a railwayman and a miner cannot follow their occupations on a part-time basis as can a journalist and a lawyer. Thus the fact is that for some Members of the House their membership is the only occupation from which they are able to draw a remuneration.

33. The second difficulty arises from the variety of the personal circumstances of Members themselves. First, there is the possession of other sources of income. Some Members have a private income, and this is likely to remain a feature of membership of the House for some time. Some Members can follow a part-time occupation or profession outside the House. This is also a feature which will no doubt continue to attach to parliamentary life. The possession of these extraneous sources of income and the commendable readiness to devote this income in whole or in part to meeting the expenses of parliamentary service are factors which reduce the financial needs of some Members below the level which would be the result of applying the principle first enunciated in 1911 and analysed in paragraphs 26-29 of this Report. Secondly, in addition to this complication there are the results affecting the expenditure of Members which arise from the geographical and other differences between their constituencies. We refer to this matter in more detail later in our Report (see paragraph 50 below).

The committee drew from this and related considerations the view that they could propose either a pay system that was the same for all Members regardless of their financial circumstances, or a scheme of differential remuneration to meet these varied circumstances. For the purposes of this section of this Paper, what is of interest is the following statement: "It would be impossible to assess the value of the difference between part-time and full-time service or the degree to which time available for external earnings is equivalent to the real opportunity or ability to make them."²⁶

TSRB has inevitably considered the question in its reviews. The 1971 review noted "a distinct growth over the last 20 years or so in the number of Members drawn from professional backgrounds."²⁷ On outside work it reported:

10. Our survey (see Appendix A) has shown however that 70 per cent of Members other than office-holders pursue some other regular or occasional occupation; though in many cases the amount of time spent on the other occupation is quite small. Nearly 60 per cent of the Members concerned spend under 10 hours per week pursuing their other occupations while Parliament is sitting, and a further 29 per cent spend from 10 to 19 hours per week. Two-thirds of these Members earn over £1,000 per year from their other occupations, over one-third more than £3,000, and one-fifth more than £5,000. with the higher figures tending to be earned by Members with constituencies in or near London. As is to be expected, Members with other occupations spend less time both in attending the House and on other Parliamentary business. We found that involvement in an outside occupation was regarded by at least three out of four Members as beneficial to the work of Parliament by keeping Members in touch with other

²⁶ Para 36.

²⁷ Cmnd 4836, para 9

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areas of life and providing expertise helpful to the work of Parliament. Only a small number of those pursuing other occupations felt that it was a disadvantage which was forced on them by financial necessity. Many Members, however, have been at pains to point out to us that the job of an MP is increasingly becoming full-time and that it becomes progressively more difficult to combine it satisfactorily with another regular occupation.

Members said they spent on average 63 hours on their Parliamentary work [although TSRB noted that the figure may have been inflated the previous session because of protracted proceedings on the Industrial Relations Bill], with 94% saying they spent more than 40 hours [para 13]. Its analysis was as follows:

24. When a salary for M Ps was first proposed in 1911, the arguments were largely concerned with the nature of the membership of the House of Commons. On the one side it was argued that without payment certain kinds of people would be excluded or that without adequate payment such people could only be Members by suffering undue financial hardship; on the other side it was said that payment would attract the wrong kind of people or that too large a payment would have the undesirable effect of producing a House exclusively composed of full-time professional Members. While the principle of remunerating the Member of Parliament is no longer seriously disputed, the question whether his job should be treated as fulltime or part-time in determining the level of pay continues to be a matter of debate. The Lawrence Committee noted that this question had never received an authoritative answer in the various recommendations which had been made from time to time on the Member's salary, and it found Members' replies to the question to be inconclusive. The Committee itself preferred not to express any opinion on this, but took into account, first, that the House of Commons contained, and was likely to continue to contain a number of Members who did not have the opportunity of supplementing their Parliamentary salary by earnings outside the House; and secondly, that the possibility of making such earnings varied greatly from Member to Member.

25. We ourselves found that, while some three-quarters of Members considered that the existing degree of involvement in other occupations was beneficial to the work of the House, most Members felt strongly that the salary should be assessed on a full-time basis. Greater opportunity to carry on a second job exists for Members engaged in some occupations, such as the law and journalism, than in others, and for London Members than for provincial Members. Moreover, while only one out of eight Members has a part-time occupation which employs him for more than 20 hours a week, less than half this proportion, or only one out of sixteen Members, spends less than 40 hours per week on Parliamentary work, while the average for all Members shown in our survey is 63 hours. We have already drawn attention in the previous chapter to the increasing demands placed on M Ps both in Parliament and in their constituencies. By any reasonable standard, therefore, most Members must be considered as working on a full-time basis, and we consider that the level of remuneration should be assessed accordingly.† Any attempt to differentiate between the pay of Members on the basis of involvement in other occupations, earnings from other sources or amount of Parliamentary work undertaken (e.g. in committees), would in our view be neither practicable nor desirable.

† Another important and interesting point is whether the job generally represents a 'lifetime' or 'an in-and-out' career. The evidence we have on this point is not, however, conclusive.

The 1979 review noted that its 1975 recommendations were based on certain principles: "we concluded that it remained right to recommend a salary that was assessed on the basis of providing adequate remuneration for the full-time Member who has no other source of income...." [Cmnd 7598, para 14]. However:

17. In basing our salary recommendations on the "full-time" MP, we do not to imply that Parliament should consist entirely of Members who have no interests outside Parliament, whether remunerated or not. This is a subject upon which we know strong differences of view exist. We suggest, however, that the position has been reached where our Parliamentary system, with the growing emphasis on Select Committees, could not work unless there were a large nucleus of Members who are able and willing to devote their full energies to the task.

18. An alternative open to us would be to recommend different levels of payment for "full-time" and for "part-time" MPs. In our 1971 Report we took the view that most Members must be regarded as working on a full-time basis. We also considered that any attempt to differentiate between Members on the basis of outside interests and earnings would not be practicable or desirable. Whatever the merits of the arguments, evidence shows that over the years the amount of time devoted by MPs to outside occupations has tended to decrease. Either occupations are given up completely, or the number of hours devoted to them is reduced. The survey carried out for our review showed that between 1975 and 1978 the proportion of Members with outside paid occupations had not gone down, but that those who continued to hold such employment were more likely than hitherto to devote under 20 hours a week to it while the House was sitting.

19. The survey showed that, apart from the small proportion of Members who have an outside occupation to which they devote more than 10 hours a week while the House is sitting, almost all Members devote more than 40 hours a week to Parliamentary business. 17 per cent devote more than 80 hours a week and seven per cent devote more than 90 hours a week. This burden is similar in broad terms to the position at the time of our last review.

20. In sum, we find no reason to change the basis upon which we put forward recommendations for Members' salaries. There have been no changes in the basic nature of the MP's job that would warrant a fundamental revaluation of the salary on this occasion,

The 1983 review reiterated these themes: [Cmnd 8881-I]

10. In deciding an appropriate level of salary for MPs at 13 June 1983 we have, as in the past, taken the view that the salary of an MP should provide adequate remuneration for a full-time Member who has no other source of income. We do not mean by this that Members should not be involved in occupations outside the House. We accept that this can be beneficial to the work of the House, although the demands placed on an MP make it increasingly difficult to combine the job with other activities. Our concern is that Members should not be driven to take on additional paid employment simply because of financial pressures. This could undermine their independence, and may place an undue burden on those Members who are engaged on a full-time basis on parliamentary work. It is important that as many Members as possible are able to take part in committee work and in debates in the chamber. We also continue to see it as important that the level of salary should be considered separately from the various allowances which are intended to reimburse Members for expenses incurred.

In this context, when examining issues of linkage, it stated:

19. To do this we have to consider whether there has been a change in the nature of the MP's job or workload that might justify some changed relativity. These are not matters that can be precisely defined or measured given the nature of an MP's job, but there are some helpful pointers. We have already referred to the evidence based on job evaluation which suggests that a degree of revaluation is now required. We have also examined the hours of work of MPs. Analysis of the returns to our questionnaire surveys suggests that, over the year to September 1982, MPs (excluding Ministers and other paid office holders) spent, on average, just over 62 hours a week on all forms of parliamentary business, including constituency work. When the House was sitting MPs spent, on average, some 69 hours a week on parliamentary business. The results of the survey have to be interpreted with caution because of the poor response rate, but they do indicate a heavy workload going well beyond the normal experience in employment elsewhere-though, allowing for the fact that comparisons with the results of past surveys are not straightforward, the hours worked do not appear to have changed markedly from those we found in our last full review. It has also been represented to us that, the demands placed on an MP are becoming more intensive. There is more lobbying than previously, with an increase in the number of well-informed pressure groups; economic circumstances are generating a greater constituency workload., and the increase in the number of Select Committees in the House of Commons places an additional demand on some Members.

Members' views, especially as expressed in debates on their pay, have continued to reflect a variety of considerations, on much the same way as those already quoted from earlier periods. Two extracts from the 11 July 1979 debate provide a flavour of this continuing discussion. Edward du Cann said:²⁸

Like my right hon. Friend, I want to say a word about work outside the House. Some people believe that no Member of Parliament should have another employment. A number of amendments deal with that point. A few hon. Members believe that there should be no increase in the salary of Members of Parliament. There is an irony in that which my right hon. Friend went some way to point out. The lower we artificially keep the remuneration of Members of Parliament, the more it is necessary for them to seek work outside the House. In addition, the allowances become more significant. I do not know what is the general opinion in the House, but for a long time I thought it unsatisfactory that people in salaried employment in industry-and now, apparently, in the House-should be so preoccupied with allowances. I am against the disease of perks. It is an insidious, spreading thing. It is much better if Members of Parliament and those outside insist on straightforwardness in matters of remuneration.

There are great dangers if Members of Parliament are obliged to depend either on allowances or on outside remuneration. Parliament should not consist only of those rich enough to be able to afford to be here, or the hacks, the place-men, the creatures of the Whips, who cannot afford to be anything else. I strongly believe that outside experience contemporary as

²⁸ HC Deb vol 970 c.497

well as past is invaluable to the work of the House.

For the Government, Norman St. John-Stevás quoted Bagehot as part of his argument: [cc481-2]

It must be borne in mind that hon. Members do not seek election for the money. The primary motivation of all hon. Members, though there may be an accretion of lesser motivations, is to give service to the country through the legislature. Anyone who enters the House hoping to make any sort of financial profit will be rudely disappointed.

The words of Bagehot 100 years ago are still applicable. He said:

"If a man of ability wishes to make money he had better go anywhere else than into Parliament for there is much more to be spent than made there."

I am sure that that is the experience of all hon. Members. It is certainly my experience. I have been an hon. Member for 15 years and I have never been offered anything-not even a day trip to Southend. I have never been able to decide whether that is because I am thought incorruptible or not worth corrupting, but those are the facts of my experience.

There is a further consideration. Hon. Members are free to undertake other employments. How they discharge their dual duties is a matter for them, but the parliamentary salary should be such as to enable those who do not wish to have an outside occupation not to have to seek it.

My belief is that the House benefits from having hon. Members actively engaged in other professions and interests, but I recognise that the House could not discharge its work unless other hon. Members were prepared to forgo that option in the interests of Parliament. I note from the report of Lord Boyle's committee that when Parliament is sitting all hon. Members devote more than 40 hours' work a week to their parliamentary duties. That compares favourably with any other occupation.

C. Reducing the size of the Commons

From time to time some Parliamentarians and commentators suggest that the Commons should be reduced from its present 651 (659 after the next election) to, say, 450 or 500 (See, for example, Peter Bottomley's EDM of 8 July, EDM 1117, 1995-96). In part, this proposal is an aspect of wider 'constitutional reform' which may include, in the view of the main Opposition parties, a reformed Second Chamber; devolution for Scotland and Wales (and, in some way, for Northern Ireland) and some form or regional devolution for England.²⁹ This would provide, it is argued, an opportunity to reduce any perceived existing 'over-representation' of areas of the UK given their own Parliament/Assembly, both on the grounds of numerical 'fairness' and a presumed reduction in Westminster business relating specifically

²⁹ Or indeed change in the powers of local government or the European Parliament

to such areas, especially Scotland. All these and related arguments are often and conveniently subsumed into what is known as the 'West Lothian Question'.³⁰ More general electoral implications of a smaller House are beyond the scope of this Paper. For present purposes what is relevant is the frequent deployment of the proposal in order to provide relative greater financial and other resources for Members.

Reduction is also argued on the grounds of improved efficiency and effectiveness of Parliament, in that, through reduction itself and any procedural and other reforms it may trigger, the Commons will be less unwieldy and thereby, in some way, become more independent of the Executive.³¹ Within this broad argument is often also the notion that fewer Members would mean greater resources and facilities, including increased pay and allowances, for Members. This assumes, of course, that any reduction in the size of the House is not matched by a compensating cut in the financing of the Commons.

Speculation on the various consequences of a reduction in the number of Members is difficult in that some proponents may take opposite views of the desirability of particular effects or changes, such as a reduction in the number of Commons Ministers and in the 'payroll vote'. As already noted, much would also depend on any other changes made or occurring before, during or after implementation of a reduction.

A main theme in the arguments of proponents of reduction is an enhancement of the House *vis-a-vis* the Executive. Presumably it is thought that if Members represented larger constituencies then they would, in some sense, have potentially greater 'democratic legitimacy', although prestige and status cannot simply be a factor of numbers, as membership of the European Parliament perhaps demonstrates. Increased concentration of funds, even at present levels, would, it is argued, make Members more able to confront the Executive through the traditional Parliamentary methods.³²

One obvious practical implication of a reduced complement would be the provision of sufficient membership of House committees (standing and select) and, for example, for overseas delegations (Council of Europe, IPU, WEU and so on). This could perhaps lead to a reduction in the number or size of committees, so that those which exist can maintain adequate attendance levels, although analysis of attendance at committees suggests that there may not be as much difficulty as may at first appear.³³ This may have knock-on implications for the sessional legislative process (re standing committees); for the scrutiny functions of

³⁰ On which see Research Paper 95/95, September 1995

³¹ The whole House could also be able to be seated in the Chamber at once, a situation which is impossible at present

³² Funds could also be directed to central or collective resources of the House itself or through, for example, 'Short Money'

³³ See Table VI.2 of this Paper

select committees (more staffing? direct questioning of witnesses by staff? fewer inquires/reports?) and for the administrative work of domestic committees. These potential difficulties could lead to more profound changes in committee practice and procedure such as more investigatory powers to select committees; greater opportunities for debate and action on their reports and a formal role in the legislative process (e.g drafting bills based on their investigations; priority speaking 'rights' in relevant debates). The legislative process itself may be altered, perhaps by greater use of second reading committees, special standing committees, joint committees with the Lords and so on; more detailed consideration on the Floor, with more framework/enabling primary legislation and more delegated legislation fleshing them out.³⁴ Smaller membership of committees could also make the achievement of appropriate party balance (especially for the 'minor' parties) more difficult for the Committee of Selection and the Whips.

If there is a greater emphasis on the Chamber rather than the Committee Floor, there could be more opportunities for Members to participate by way of debate, question and so on, This would depend on whether there was an overall reduction in the level of Chamber activity. For example, would a greater proportion of Members be enabled to participate in debates or Question Time (i.e. fewer disappointed Members with unasked questions or unread speeches) or would roughly the same number of Members participate by filling the available time? This could happen informally (longer speeches, more interventions, longer questions etc.) or formally, by, for example, less use or abolition of time limits on speeches or allowing, say, second supplementaries by Members at Question Time. The time in the Chamber devoted to Questions and debates could be expanded to allow for more questioning of Ministers, more debates on select committee reports, more private Members' time and so on.

Assuming the overall constituency workload did not decrease, each Member would be dealing with around 30% more constituents, leading to an increasing workload per Member. This could fuel to demands for more Members' staff (perhaps in the constituency as well as at Westminster) and/or House staff to cope, directly and indirectly, with this work. Larger constituencies could mean in some cases more frequent crossing of local authority and other administrative boundaries, thereby making constituency work more complex and making it less easy for Members' and their staff to be on close terms with relevant local officials and councillors. If the size of Members' offices grew from the '1 secretary + 1 RA + (1 other)' rough average, constituents may feel more remote from their Members and less able to deal with them directly rather than with one or more of their staff. This might speed up the perceived trend towards formal constituency offices instead of, or as well as, an office at Westminster. Similar issues might arise over constituency surgeries with larger constituencies especially in more rural areas. Would Members hold more surgeries around the constituency; the same number but spread out further, or even have their staff take some surgeries directly on their behalf while they had a surgery elsewhere in the constituency at the same time? If

³⁴ The post-Jopling trend on this point is probably in the opposite direction with more SI scrutiny and debate in committee off the Floor

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Members felt under pressure from the increased workload would they seek to reject certain types of 'work', by redirecting enquiries/complaints to the appropriate body (local authority, public body, utility company etc.) where they would at present deal with them themselves?

The most difficult area of potential change is perhaps in the balance between the front-benches and the back-benches on each side of the House. There have been suggestions recently that a reduction in the front-benches rather than, or as well as, an overall reduction in the House would be of greatest benefit to the reform of Parliament as it would increase the proportion of those scrutinising the Executive, and perhaps make them more independent-minded by being less ambitious for office and thus less amenable to party discipline.³⁵ However the question of a reduction in the number of Ministers (and, by analogy, their Opposition shadows) is a complex one, depending on the level of ministerial workload (itself often said by academics and others to be already too great), and the extent to which, if any, the size of the ministerial team is influenced by 'payroll vote' considerations. This last point may be of relevance to the tier of PPSs which, if removed or reduced to, say, one per Cabinet minister or ministerial team, would itself reduce the size of the *de facto* front bench. If the size of the front-benches remained roughly at present levels, then there would be significantly fewer backbenchers in the House, with implications for some of the points (committees, delegations, constituency work) already mentioned. For example, a greater proportion of the population would be represented by ministers, with the implications that has for the way in which constituency matters and grievances can be pursued in Parliament and in 'Whitehall'.

The cost implications of a reduction in the size of the House could be speculated upon along, for example, the following lines. First, salaries and allowances. Assuming there were no intentional compensating cost savings, the Member's salary could rise to more than £45,000³⁶ (from its present £34,085) and the Office Costs Allowance to more than £57,000 per Member (it is now £43,908) with no increase in the overall cost. There might also be changes in other allowances although this would depend in part on the geographical distribution of MPs in the new House. In 1996-97, £2.4 million is spent on contributions to the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund and £1.8 million on pension provision for Members' staff;³⁷ a smaller House could lead to better average provision and therefore higher pensions, or a lower level of expenditure.

A smaller House would also have implications for Short Money which at present is distributed by a formula which links together votes cast and seats won at the previous general election. If the formula were not changed, expenditure (totalling £2.0 million in 1996-97) would be reduced; alternatively the formula could be changed to maintain current expenditure levels with the result that the amounts payable to each party would rise. There might also

³⁵ An increase in the status of committee membership as an alternative Parliamentary career path could be a relevant factor here

³⁶ The exact sum would depend on numbers of Ministers and the resultant cost of their Parliamentary salary

³⁷ Supply Estimates 1996-97 Class XVIII,7

be a distributional impact. Because the present formula combines votes and seats, parties which win few seats relative to the votes cast for them receive larger amounts of Short money per head: in 1996-97, for example, the average amount payable per Liberal Democrat MP is more than £12,500 compared with an average per (say) Labour MP of just over £5,600. A smaller House in a first-past-the post system would be likely to increase the lack of proportionality of the House with the knock-on effect of higher average amounts of Short Money per MP from smaller parties.

It is very difficult to say what the effects on the administrative costs of the House might be, since they would depend on all sorts of unpredictable factors. For example, there might be reductions in expenditure on Parliamentary papers and the like³⁸ and possibly in some committee costs and in the Finance and Administration Department but other costs, for example of many of the procedural offices, the Serjeant's department and Official Report and the Library (fewer MPs but more Members' staff producing as much, if not more, demand) would be unlikely to fall.

III Ministerial Pay

A. Introduction

A general history and analysis of Ministerial pay is beyond the scope of this Paper. Some background is provided in previous TSRB and Select Committee reports, especially the report of the Lawrence Committee in 1964 (Cmd 2516).³⁹ A flavour of the history can be gleaned from the following brief snapshot.

Ministers have always been paid in one form or another. In his *History of England* Macaulay commented on the 17th century -

"The regular salary, however, was the smallest part of the gains of an official man of that age. From the noblemen who held the white staff and the great seal, down to the humblest tidewaiter and gauger, what would now be called gross corruption was practised without disguise and without reproach ... In the 17th century a statesman who was at the head of affairs might easily, and without giving scandal, accumulate in no long time an estate amply sufficient to support a dukedom."

³⁸ The Vote bundle cost £6.7 million in 1992-93 (the latest year for which figures are readily available), for example [HC Deb 2.11.93 c.85W]

³⁹ See also Background Paper 19, 16.12.71, factsheet 31, January 1996 and a fascinating article in the 1857 volume of the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* by William Farr, "On the pay of Ministers of the Crown", pp. 102-121

This state of affairs continued until late in the 18th century. An excellent instance of the 'old corruption' is afforded in the career of Henry Fox -

"In the Newcastle-Pitt Government [Henry] Fox, through the King's intervention, obtained the pay office, 'the situation of all others I like best' He was to hold it for the next eight years, but even after that was able, for technical reasons, to retain in his hands vast sums of public money (about £500,000 between 1768 and 1774) which he employed to his own advantage; and while the official income of the paymaster was about £3,000 p.a., Fox's unofficial profits during the seventeen years 1757-74, as calculated from his ledgers, amounted to about £400,000 half of which he laid out in landed property."⁴⁰

Soon after this a period of reform was ushered in by Burke's Economical Reform Act of 1782. Gradually the opportunities for corrupt practices were eliminated from public office. By the time of the electoral reform Act of 1832 the position had been reversed so that, far from the high offices of state leading to a fortune, a fortune was required to sustain them. Not only were many perquisites formerly attaching to officers of state (in cases e.g. the secretaries of state, the official salary was the smallest part of the total amount netted) swept away, but also the amounts of many official salaries were reduced, often in actual figures and certainly in real terms. At this period, of course, such offices were more often than not occupied by statesmen with large private fortunes, to whom the official salary will have been relatively less important. It seems clear that official salaries were fixed from time to time as new posts were established. In this matter sense the payment of a salary became a regular matter. But there appeared to be no more general regularisation, i.e. to provide a uniform pattern, until the changes of 1831. These followed the report of a Commons Select Committee on the Reduction of Salaries.⁴¹ As far as ministerial *salaries* are concerned this seems to have been the first statutory use of salary bands corresponding to status in the ministerial hierarchy, along much the same lines as today. This is also suggested in the 1946 Lawrence report on Members' and ministers' pay. It may be that the idea of the salary bands originated with the 1817 *Act to enable His Majesty to recompense the services of persons holding or who have held, certain high and efficient civil offices*⁴² and appear to be the first regularisation of official pensions. The preamble explains that the abolition of a number of sinecure offices of state (part of the process of rooting out corruption) with the King had previously been able to reward his servants, had made it necessary to arrange for some other means of recompensing public service. The Act provides for four classes of pension payable to persons who have held specified offices, and with its amending Acts, principally that of 1825, which added a number of offices in each class, corresponds pretty well with the 1831 bands.

⁴⁰ *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-90*, Vol.II, p.464

⁴¹ 1830-31 HC 322, P.P. Vol III, p. 445

⁴² cap.65. It deals exclusively with pensions

The next Select Committee to examine ministers' pay was that of 1850.⁴³ This made no changes in the structure of 1831 but recommended a number of salary reductions in the lower bands. From this point on, up to and including the *Ministers of the Crown Act 1937*, which was the first truly comprehensive treatment of ministers' salaries, developments are admirably summarised in the Lawrence report. The relevant passages follow:⁴⁴

101. The next Select Committee to consider the matter was appointed in 1920. In the meantime certain offices had been newly created or revived and others had disappeared. Salaries attaching to new offices in newly formed Departments were provided for in the statutes setting up the new ministries. The general rule adopted in the assessment of the salaries of the junior Ministers in the Departments of State was to assign a salary of £1,500 where the Minister in charge of the Department received £5,000 and £1,200 where the Minister in charge received £2,000... paid a salary of £1,200 (the salary of the Postmaster General then being £2,500).

102. The Select Committee of 1920 on Ministers' remuneration, while recognising that conditions had changed since the existing scales had been established, did not think that it was then a suitable time to recommend by a general increase in ministerial remuneration a large addition to the total amount of money allocated to the payment of Ministers. They confined themselves to the consideration of the relative position between one Minister and another, having regard to their responsibilities or to the work of the office held....

103. In 1930, as we have mentioned in paragraph 93 above, another Select Committee was appointed to consider whether the Report of the Select Committee of 1920 required any modification in the light of the then existing circumstances. We have already referred in paragraph 93 to the material part of the conclusions of this Committee. It was that the existing scale of ministerial salaries was in some respects anomalous and in others inadequate but that the time was inopportune for a general revision. The Committee endorsed the classifications recommended by the Committee of 1920. Owing to the adverse economic conditions at the time the Government did not take any action on the Committee's Report.

104. Apart from the temporary abatement in salaries between 1931 and 1935 no further step was taken until 1936. when the House of Commons resolved in effect that the recommendations of the Committee of 1920 should be implemented as soon as possible. The result was the passing of the *Ministers of the Crown Act, 1937*. which was the first comprehensive enactment relating to ministerial salaries.

105. This Act made a number of individual salary changes within the classification bands but apart from providing for a salary of £10,000 (and a pension of £2,000) for the Prime Minister, it generally gave statutory confirmation to the levels of remuneration which had then been paid for something over a century. The highest salary for senior Ministers was still fixed at £5,000. Four Ministers, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Postmaster General and the First Commissioner of Works received £3,000 (£5,000 if they were in the Cabinet) ; the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury received £3,000 and the Minister of Pensions £2,000; junior Ministers ranged from £2,000 to £1,000. The Act also provided for the payment of an annual salary of £2,000 to the Leader of the Opposition.

⁴³ 1850 HC 611 Vol VX p.179

⁴⁴ Cmnd 2516, 1964, paras 101-105, extracts

B. Parliamentary salary for Ministers and office-holders

The SSRB has recommended that the remuneration of ministers and paid office-holders be increased by giving them a full Parliamentary salary [Cm 3330 paras 8-9]. It should be noted at the outset that although the current amount is known as the *reduced* Parliamentary salary, this is in recognition of the fact that it is less than the full Parliamentary salary, *not* that it is an abatement of that full salary. As the following extract from the 1946 select committee on Members' expenses explains, Ministers and office-holders used not to receive any Parliamentary, as opposed to ministerial, salary as such:⁴⁵

11. By their terms of reference Your Committee were instructed to inquire into the salaries and expenses of Ministers with salaries under £5,000 a year. Ministers who draw the salary attached to their office cease to draw their salaries as Members of the House, and are thus precluded from claiming expenses as Members. In the knowledge of Your Committee some junior Ministers have found it more advantageous to forgo their ministerial salary and to retain their salaries as Members. All have found that they have undertaken heavy responsibilities to the House and to their Departments without a commensurate increase in actual emoluments and, in some cases, with a considerable reduction in their personal income. Your Committee consider that some relief should be given in the way of expenses, and that the simplest method would be for Ministers with salaries under £5,000 a year to continue to draw £500 a year for expenses as Members of the House in addition to their salary. This would require legislation to amend the Ministers of the Crown Act, 1937, and other material Acts. The Chairman of Ways and Means and the Deputy Chairman should also receive this allowance in addition to their salaries.

Your Committee therefore recommend that Ministers with salaries of less than £5000 a year, the Chairman of Ways and Means and the Deputy Chairman should be granted an expense allowance at the rate of £500 a year free of income tax as Members of the House in addition to their present salaries; and that the legislation necessary to amend the Ministers of the Crown Act, 1937, and other material Acts should be introduced. They further recommend that the salaries of these Ministers and of the Chairman of Ways and Means and of the Deputy Chairman should be reviewed by the Government.

Announcing the Government's proposals on the Report's recommendations on 30 April 1946, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton, said *inter alia*:⁴⁶

(2) They propose that a Member of this House in receipt of salary as a Minister (if less than £5,000 a year), or as Chairman or Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, or as Leader of the Opposition, or in receipt of pension as ex-Prime Minister, should be entitled, in addition to such salary or pension, to a salary of £500 a year as a Member of Parliament; and should be entitled to claim relief from Income Tax in respect of expenses, incurred as a Member of Parliament, within the limit of £500 a year.

⁴⁵ HC 93, 1945-46. See ss4(2) and 6(2), *Ministers of the Crown Act 1937*

⁴⁶ HC Deb vol 422 cc38-9, 30.4.96

The House debated the Report and the proposed resolutions, one of which provided for an annual Parliamentary salary for Ministers and office-holders of £500 (other Members' salary was set at £1,000, up from £600), on 29 May 1946.⁴⁷ There would be no general increase in their ministerial salaries. Osbert Peake (Conservative) objected to the reduced level: [cc1242-3]

I should like to express a view on the question of why junior Ministers receiving less than £5,000 a year, and officers of the House, that is, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, are not to be given the full benefit of the Parliamentary salary. It is really quite illogical to give these people one half of a Member's salary. They are full Members of Parliament. On the face of it, therefore, it really seems a little absurd to give them only half of a Member of Parliament's salary. I suppose that the explanation is that Ministers receiving £5,000 a year are to receive no Parliamentary salary, and that it is thought convenient to place these junior Ministers, Whips and

officers of the House in a kind of halfway house, and to say that, as the £5,000 a year Ministers are to receive nothing, and as the ordinary Back Bench Member is to receive the salary in full, these people in an intermediate position shall receive half the Parliamentary salary.

I am not quite satisfied with that. I have great sympathy with Whips and junior Ministers. They have been hardly treated hitherto. They give up the best years of their life, from the point of view of a private or professional career, and I have never been satisfied that they were sufficiently well remunerated.

Tom Smith (Conservative), a member of the select committee, said: [c1259]

Some hon Members who gave evidence and who sat on the Select Committee, in addition to being Members of Parliament, have been Parliamentary Secretaries. The Parliamentary Secretary or Under-Secretary, the moment he accepts office, has to put off all outside earnings. He has not a penny piece allowed to him in any shape or form for expenses. There is no 12 months' carry-over of his Income Tax, it is taken off at the end of the month, and when one comes to reckon what is left he is not much better off than he was when he was an ordinary Member of Parliament. On balance we

thought it was wise to say that the Parliamentary Secretaries should have something. Although my right hon. Friend the Member for North Leeds (Mr. Peake) spoke about giving Under-Secretaries and Parliamentary Secretaries half the Parliamentary salary, I am rather inclined to the view that there would have been some criticism if the Select Committee had suggested that they should have an increase of £1,000 instead of £500.

The House, once it passed the relevant resolutions, then moved on to the second reading of the *Ministerial Salaries Bill*, which gave effect, *inter alia*, to the new £500 Parliamentary salary [cc1300-17]. The plight of junior Ministers was mentioned by, amongst others, Capt. Crookshank (Conservative): "I have no doubt that there are many instances in which the public service, or administration in the public sphere, has lost as a result of the treatment that has been afforded junior ministers" [c1301]. The Chancellor, Mr Dalton, explained the pay relativities of Ministers and Members.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ HC Deb vol 423 cc1231-1300

⁴⁸ cc1312-3. See s3 of the *Ministerial Salaries Act 1946*

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I return to the major points which have been raised. Private Members will get a net increment-although it will not be net after tax deduction of *plus* £400. They will go up from £600 to £1,000. A junior Minister will get *plus* £500. It is a *plus* of £500 to be compared with a *plus* of £400, rather than a total of £1,000 of the Private Member to be put against the proposal for a plus of £1,000 for the junior Minister. I think it would be excessive for a junior Minister, at this stage, to get a *plus* of £1,000 when the ordinary Member was getting *plus* £400, and a Cabinet Minister was getting a *plus* of zero. I think we are meeting the case reasonably by giving the junior Minister a *plus* of £500 and enabling him to do what he will do, namely, claim against that for Income Tax relief. Here, we are closely following the proposal of the Select Committee, which was an automatic tax free increment of £500. That, we think, is not a good thing. But we think it is reasonable to give the junior Minister a *plus* of £500. In order to make it tax relievable you have to put it as part of his salary as a Member of the House, and not as part of his salary as a Minister.

The 1954 Select Committee report on Members' expenses considered the question of ministerial salaries:⁴⁹

14. Until 1946, no Minister received any payment in respect of his Membership of the House of Commons, and this is still the case with regard to Ministers holding offices to which salaries of £5,000 a year or over are attached. No account is taken of the fact that on assumption of office a Minister does not cease to have duties or to incur expenses as a Member. Not only, therefore, does a Minister with a salary of £5,000 a year or over receive no payment in respect of his Parliamentary duties, but he is allowed no income tax relief in respect of his Parliamentary expenses, since there is no payment against which they can be offset. Since 1946, Ministers holding offices with salaries of less than £5,000 a year have been entitled to draw £500 a year as Members, that is, half the normal amount of a Member's payment. Such Ministers can, therefore, obtain income tax relief on their Parliamentary expenses up to £500 a year, but no more.

It reported the views of Ministers:

28. Senior and junior Ministers and ex-Ministers, in their replies to the Questionnaire, have drawn attention to the position of Ministers. A senior Minister, as stated in paragraph 14, receives no payment as a Member of Parliament. He receives his salary as Minister and the ordinary railway vouchers given to Members. He, therefore, has no payment as a Member against which can be charged his Parliamentary expenses. These expenses continue, of course, as before when he was an ordinary Member without any office, and may even be heavier, but he has no sum as payment against which they can be allowed by the Inland Revenue authorities for income tax relief. The junior Minister was in the same position until 1946, when, as stated in paragraph 14, he was allowed £500 a year as a Member of Parliament and against that sum, and that sum alone, can be charged his Parliamentary expenses, which continue-as before he became a Minister and may be heavier. A number of junior Ministers state that they are, in fact, worse off as Ministers than they were as ordinary Members. Moreover, unlike other Members, Ministers, senior and junior, are debarred from earning

⁴⁹ HC 72, 1953-54

anything by undertaking outside work.

The committee recommended that all Ministers should receive a full Parliamentary salary:

63. Your Committee also recommend that all Ministers should receive the same payment as other Members in respect of their Parliamentary duties, and that the necessary amending legislation should be introduced to effect this. This payment will enable Ministers to claim relief from income tax on their Parliamentary expenses in the same way as other Members, and will thus remove an existing anomaly. Your Committee appreciate that, if this recommendation is adopted, adjustments may be required in the salaries of Ministers in respect of their offices, but this matter does not come within their terms of reference.

The House debated the Report on 13 May 1954, and the issue of Ministerial pay was considered by a number of Members.⁵⁰ The Chancellor, Rab Butler, would not be drawn on the issue: [c.1496]

In this short speech I have not said anything about Under-Secretaries or about Ministers, because I think they will have to be brought in on another occasion. I will only say that it is crystal clear that the case of the Under-Secretaries needs very early attention. They are neither being paid enough nor are they getting adequate attention for their expenses. In the case of many Ministers of State, they are actually getting more by the combination of half their salary as a Member of Parliament than the Cabinet Ministers, who are so vastly superior to them in every way.

Mr. Frederick Lee (Newton): Could the right hon. Gentleman make those sentiments retrospective?

Mr. Butler : I certainly could not make them retrospective to a previous Administration, and I doubt if they could be made retrospective to the present one. I say nothing about Cabinet Ministers. The problems of the Under-Secretaries and the Ministers of State are those to which the House will have to give attention and which are having my constant attention.

In the debate later that month, Mr Butler promised legislation at some unspecified date:⁵¹

Now, I come to the second point, about Under-Secretaries. Whatever may be the results of any Motion carried or not carried today, as the result of our exchanges, it will be the intention of the Government to introduce what will have to be legislation to deal with the question of junior Ministers. I cannot give any date for that because it will involve some little argument about the timetable with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. I do not think it will be in the near future, but the fact will not mean that it is to be put off for ever...

My hon. Friend the Member for East Aberdeenshire said that junior Ministers should be

treated as Members of Parliament. By that I suppose he means that whatever conclusion the House comes to about Members' allowances or salaries, that allowance should be made available for junior Ministers. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] By a strange coincidence, my mind was moving on the same lines. When we decide it, we shall have to deal with the question of Ministers of State and eventually the question of Cabinet Ministers, because it is very easy to work out a permutation and combination which will make a Minister of State very much better off than Cabinet Ministers, in which case people will desire to go backwards in their careers instead of forward.

⁵⁰ HC Deb vol 527 cc.1439-1561, 13.5.54. See, for example Mr Mellish (cc.1446-7), Mr Deedes (c.1455), Air Commodore Harvey (cc.1476-7) and Mr Attlee (c.1481)

⁵¹ HC Deb vol 528 cc.88-9, 24.5.54

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While this may aid party meetings and appeal to our more ambitious friends, I think it would be undesirable for that situation to develop.

Ministers continued to resist acting on this matter for the next few years, until, as part of a general statement on Parliamentary pay on 4 July 1957, the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, said:⁵²

There are, as the House knows, a number of salaries of less than £1,500, and these will be raised by £1,000. Salaries of £5,000 or above will not be increased. At present, Ministers in the House of Commons whose salaries are less than £5,000 are entitled to draw £500 of their Parliamentary salary. It is proposed that in future all Ministers in the House of Commons shall, whatever their salary, draw £750 of the total Parliamentary remuneration in addition to their Ministerial salaries. Since these changes generally will require legislation a Bill will be introduced as soon as possible.

Responding, the Leader of the Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell, welcomed the proposals (which had been discussed with the Opposition in advance): "I have always felt it unreasonable that senior Ministers should be treated as if they were not Members of Parliament and unable, because they were not drawing a Parliamentary salary, to claim Parliamentary expenses. That is a matter which is now to be put right." [c.1311]

The Chancellor, Peter Thorneycroft, explained the statutory implementation of these proposals introducing the second reading of the *Ministerial Salaries Bill* on 9 July 1957:⁵³

Clause 2 relates to the amount of parliamentary pay to be drawn by Ministers. The Act of 1937 barred Ministers from drawing any salary as a Member of Parliament. That bar was eased to some extent by the Act of 1946, which allowed a junior Minister to draw £500 a year of his parliamentary salary. All the Bill does is to remove the bar altogether so that we might decide that when we discuss the Resolution dealing with the salary of Members of Parliament, which we are to do later this afternoon. That does not need to be pursued further in the context of the Bill. In future it will no longer be fixed statute.

For the Opposition, Harold Wilson supported the proposal on Parliamentary pay: [c.221]

⁵² HC Deb vol 572 c.1309, 4.7.57

⁵³ HC Deb vol 573 cc.218-9, 9.7.57

Again, I should have thought that most people would consider the parliamentary allowance to senior Ministers to be fair. It has always seemed to me a gross anomaly that a Minister who is a Member of the House not only received no additional parliamentary remuneration but was not allowed to offset against his ministerial salary a single penny of his expenditure in the fulfilment of his parliamentary duties and some of those perhaps professional or business people in the country who may have been a little critical of this proposal would be astounded if they themselves were treated in the same way.

It is a fact, of course, that nobody can be a Minister unless he is either a Member of this House or a Member of another place. The number of Members of another place who can be Ministers is, fortunately, limited by Statute. Therefore, by far the larger number of Ministers must be Members of this House. It seems quite wrong that the essential expenditure that they have to incur in being Members of this House, whether on postage to their constituents, travelling in their constituencies, or all the other expenses with which hon. Members are so familiar should be a deduction from the ministerial salary, because the ministerial salary could not continue if those drawing it ceased to be Members of the House.

After second reading resolutions were debated and approved by the House supporting the proposals on Parliamentary salary for Ministers⁵⁴, and the appropriate resolution on Ministerial salaries was agreed to on 11 July.⁵⁵

The 1964 Lawrence Committee offers a useful history of Ministerial pay as part of its general examination of Parliamentary remuneration. It conveniently reviewed the history of Ministers' pay,⁵⁶ and concluded that ministerial salaries should be substantially increased. The Committee recommended that the amount of Parliamentary salary should be increased from £750 to £1,250:

120. In this connection we draw attention to the fact that those Ministers who are Members of the House of Commons are entitled to draw at present £750 of their parliamentary salary. We have referred to this matter in paragraphs 54 and 109 above and we recommend that the same Ministers should continue to be entitled to this allowance but in the increased amount of £1,250. The reasons for our adoption of this figure as part of the salary of Members of the

⁵⁴ cc.227-49

⁵⁵ c.552, and see s2 of the *Ministerial Salaries Act 1957*

⁵⁶ Cmnd 2516, paras 98-109, Nov. 1964

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House of Commons to represent an average amount of expenses have already been given. We were told that in each of the three years for which figures of expenses are shown in Appendix B the median figure for expenses of Ministers was £750. In each year that was also the amount of their parliamentary allowance. It seems to us to be a fair inference that this allowance has become inadequate to cover all properly deductible expenses.

Giving the Government's response on 16 November 1964, the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, said that it would not be appropriate in the prevailing economic circumstances to raise ministerial salaries to the recommended levels, and proposed a rise of half the recommended amounts from 1 April 1965. The proposed £1,250 "allowance" for all Members would be available to Ministers "but that will be taxable and will be on exactly the same basis as for any Member of the House".⁵⁷ These proposals were debated and approved on 18 December 1964.⁵⁸

Ministerial pay was considered in detail in the comprehensive review of the newly-established Top Salaries Review Body (TSRB), under Lord Boyle of Handsworth, which reported in December 1971. The Report described the Parliamentary salary and allowances of Ministers:⁵⁹

80. Ministers and other paid office-holders who are Members of the House of Commons, are paid a Parliamentary salary of £1,250 in addition to their Ministerial salaries. This Parliamentary allowance was designed to cover the expenses of performing the Parliamentary duties which arise from the representation of a constituency. In addition, they are entitled to the secretarial allowance of up to £500 a year, and to all the facilities provided to Members of the House of Commons, including free travel between Westminster, constituency and home, or the payment of car mileage allowance in lieu. Ministers and office-holders in the House of Lords, although not eligible for the daily expenses allowance introduced in 1957, have been entitled since 1947, in common with other Peers, to reimbursement of their travelling expenses between their homes and Westminster for the purpose of attending the House of Lords. A full list of the present salaries for individual Ministers and office-holders is given in Appendix 1.

Looking at other countries, it noted that it was "fairly general practice for Ministers to be paid their full Parliamentary salary where this is constitutionally possible" [para 85]. The analysis of the Parliamentary salary was as follows:

86. It has been frequently put to us in evidence that Ministers should receive the same Parliamentary salary as ordinary Members of Parliament, so that they can claim their Parliamentary expenses up to the full limit available to Members of Parliament in general. Their duties as Members, it is said, do not become any less onerous when they are appointed Ministers. Some Ministers pointed out that the time available to deal with the general work

⁵⁷ HC Deb vol 702 c.44, 16.11.64

⁵⁸ HC Deb vol 704 cc729-821

⁵⁹ 1st report of TSRB, Cmnd 4836

falling to Members was reduced on becoming a Minister, and that this necessitated extra help and involved additional costs. Against this view it may be argued that appointment to a Ministerial post must certainly affect the representative role of a Member to some extent: his duties at Westminster become essentially Ministerial in character. Ministers cannot raise constituency matters in the House nor take part in Select Committees. There is, therefore, a case for saying that only that part of the Parliamentary salary which can be regarded as related to constituency duties should be paid to Ministers, or at least that some reduction in the level of Parliamentary salary should be made on these grounds. Indeed the concept applied by the Lawrence Committee, and earlier, in fixing the amount of Parliamentary salary for Ministers was that it should represent the average amount of expenses incurred in carrying out Parliamentary duties; in other words it was not intended to contain any element of remuneration beyond what was likely to be necessary to cover expenses. We think that this goes too far and that some element of remuneration should be allowed for the time spent by Ministers in attending to the interests of their constituents. Our survey of hours spent on Parliamentary work shows no significant difference between Ministers and other Members in regard to hours spent outside the House on behalf of constituents, although hours spent inside the House show a marked reduction, which is more than compensated by the hours spent on departmental and other work outside the House. Unfortunately this information is based on a small number of returns.

87. We have found the problem of determining the amount of Parliamentary salary which should be paid to Ministers to be one of the more difficult we have had to face. We are inclined to feel, however, that to pay Ministers the full Parliamentary salary payable to ordinary Members without abatement would be over generous and, after a great deal of consideration, we have reached the conclusion that an appropriate amount at the present time would be £3,000; but, in proposing this amount, we do not mean to imply that the same fraction of the full Parliamentary salary will always be appropriate in the future.

They recommended:

92. In the previous chapter we discussed among other points the question of the Parliamentary salary payable to Ministers and concluded that this should be sufficient to provide an element of remuneration, as well as covering expenses, in recognition of the general duties which a Minister continues to carry as a Member of Parliament, as distinct from his Ministerial duties. We explained that we had assessed the appropriate level of payment at £3,000.

93. *Recommendation:* We recommend that Ministers and other paid office-holders who are Members of the House of Commons should receive a Parliamentary salary of £3,000 a year.

94. Our recommendation takes into account the improved allowances recommended for MPs, including London supplement, from which Ministers in the House of Commons will also benefit.

The Government accepted the Report's proposals,⁶⁰ and it, and the requisite *Ministerial and*

⁶⁰ See the statement of the Lord President, William Whitelaw, on 6 December 1971, HC Deb vol 827 cc949-50

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Other Salaries Bill, was debated 20 December.⁶¹

The issue was further examined by TSRB in 1975. Its 7th Report contained the following analysis and proposal:⁶²

23. Ministers and paid office holders who are Members of the House of Commons are paid a Parliamentary salary of £3,000 in addition to the salary attached to the particular appointment. This Parliamentary salary recognises that Ministers and paid office holders remain fully responsible, as Members of Parliament, for constituents' interests throughout the period they hold Ministerial (or other) office. We shall make recommendations on the salaries attached to Ministerial and other offices in the second part of our report, but we consider it appropriate to review the Parliamentary salary at this stage. The Parliamentary salary is a Minister's due as a Member and it ought not to be left unchanged at a time when the salary of a backbench Member is increased. Moreover, as the salaries of Ministers and office holders are not considered in this part of our report, the implementation of our recommendation for Members' salary without a change in the Parliamentary salary would result in an extremely narrow differential between the pay of Members and of Parliamentary Secretaries and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State, and in a 'reverse differential' with the pay of certain office holders.

24. In our 1971 review, we examined the basis of the Parliamentary salary which previously had been notionally related to the average amount of expenses incurred in carrying out Parliamentary duties: we concluded that this basis was not appropriate and that it should be changed to include an element of remuneration. In recommending the current level of Parliamentary salary (£3,000), we commented that the consequent relationship with Members' salary (two-thirds) would not necessarily remain appropriate in the future and the question of this relationship remains to some extent a matter of judgment. We have again considered the argument that Ministers and office holders should receive the full Members' salary and, for the same reasons as we found it unacceptable in 1971, we find it unacceptable now. The demands of a Ministerial appointment must impinge-in most cases, very substantially-on the time available to devote to the normal functions of a Member. Moreover, Ministers by convention cannot raise constituency matters in the House and they do not normally take part in Select Committees. At the same time, we have evidence of some increase in the pressure of constituency work falling upon Ministers and other paid office holders, although it must also be borne in mind that Ministers and paid office holders in the House of Commons remain entitled, with certain modifications, to the allowances and facilities available to Members of Parliament. After careful consideration, we conclude that the right course on this occasion is to limit the increase in the Parliamentary salary to an amount which broadly maintains its 1972 value.

Recommendation: We recommend that the Parliamentary salary of Ministers and other paid office holders who are Members of the House of Commons should be increased to £5,000.

⁶¹ HC Deb vol 828 cc1129-1252, 20.12.71

⁶² Cmnd 6136, July 1975

However, the Government, in pursuance of its pay restraint policy, did not accept this:⁶³

With regard to Ministerial salaries, the House will recall that on 20th December 1974 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that all Ministerial salaries would be frozen until at least 1st January 1976. In relation to the recommendations of the report, the Government propose that there should be no increase in the amount of the parliamentary salary drawn by Cabinet Ministers who are also Members of this House. Ministers outside the Cabinet will receive an increase of £700 compared with the £2,000 recommended by the Review Body - the same proportion of the recommended increase proposed for Members' salaries.

The Government's proposals were debated and agreed to on 22 July 1975.⁶⁴ TSRB returned to Ministerial pay the following year, and made the following observation:⁶⁵

68. The Parliamentary salary and the allowances available to Ministers and office holders in the House of Commons recognise the additional burden constituency duties and responsibilities which they continue to carry and which Members of the House of Lords do not have. Moreover, since our 1971 review, the Parliamentary salary has been recognised as providing an element remuneration for the work of representing a constituency whereas, previously it had been related notionally to the average amount of expenses incurred in carrying out Parliamentary duties. However, the relationship of the Parliamentary salary both to the full Member's salary and to the salaries of Ministers and other office holders will need to be re-examined at the time of the next review of Parliamentary remuneration and in the light of the circumstances at that time.

Again, the Government's proposals were subject to pay restraint, and no action was taken on these specific proposals.⁶⁶

TSRB again examined the issue in its 1979 Report:⁶⁷

22. It is appropriate to deal at this point with the Parliamentary salary - the pay that Ministers and other office holders in the House of Commons receive in recognition of their responsibility for their constituents as distinct from their Ministerial or other responsibilities. We have indicated the outcome of our last recommendations for the Parliamentary salary (paragraph 4). Against a recommended level of £5,000 in June 1975 terms, Cabinet Ministers received no increase at the time in the existing level of £3,000; other Ministers received a restricted increase to £3,700. With the addition, where appropriate, of the increases allowed under subsequent restraint measures (paid in relation to the Parliamentary salary and not to the Ministerial salary), the current amounts are £3,529 and £4,299 or £4,642 respectively.

⁶³ Edward Short, Lord President, HC Deb vol 895 c.1506, 16.7.75. The reference to the Prime Minister's statement on a Ministerial pay freeze is HC Deb vol 883 c.648W; 20.12.74

⁶⁴ HC Deb vol 896 cc441-516

⁶⁵ 8th Report, Cmnd 6574, July 1976

⁶⁶ See the statement of the Lord President, Michael Foot, on 12 July 1976, HC Deb vol 915 cc32-4, and the debate on 23 July, HC Deb vol 915 cc2243-2336

⁶⁷ 12th Report, Cmnd 7598, June 1979

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23. In our last review, we confirmed that the Parliamentary salary should not equal the full salary of a backbench MP on the grounds that the responsibility of Ministerial office must impinge on the individual's ability to undertake to the same extent the full range of an MP's Parliamentary activities. This continues to be our view. We do however propose that there should be a small adjustment in the present relationship. The average amount of time that Ministers and other office holders, as a group, devote to constituency business appears to have decreased since 1975. The reductions are in our view sufficient to suggest that the Parliamentary salary should now be a slightly smaller proportion of the full salary of a backbench MP.

Recommendation. We recommend that the Parliamentary salary of Ministers and other paid office holders who are Members of the House of Commons should be increased to £7,000 with effect from 13 June 1979.

The Government proposed that any rise be staged⁶⁸

24. In addition to the salary for their office, Ministers and other paid office holders in the House of Commons receive a parliamentary salary to recognise that they remain fully responsible as Members of Parliament for constituency matters throughout their period of office. However, the responsibilities of office inevitably limit the individual's ability to undertake the full range of parliamentary activities other than those entailed by the office; and we have concluded in the past that the parliamentary salary of a Minister should be a proportion of the full salary of a backbencher. It currently stands at 58 per cent of the full salary for a backbench MP, which was the relationship established by our recommendations in 1979. Ministers and other paid office holders in the House of Lords are not eligible to receive the parliamentary salary as they do not have constituency responsibilities, but the Government decided in 1981 that Ministers below the rank of Cabinet Minister and other paid office holders in the House of Lords should receive a higher salary for their office than their Commons colleagues. The present salary levels are set out in Appendix C.

25. In determining appropriate levels for the total salaries of Ministers and other paid office holders, we have to judge an appropriate salary for the office, taking account of the responsibilities involved and the relationship to the salary of a backbench MP. We also have to consider how to recognise the constituency responsibilities of Ministers and other paid office holders in the House of Commons, and any special factors affecting office holders in the House of Lords that should be taken into account in salary.

and⁶⁹

34. The parliamentary salary recognises the constituency responsibilities of Commons Ministers and office holders as distinct from the responsibilities of their office. We have considered whether this separate element in salary should be retained, or whether there should be an inclusive salary, covering all aspects of the office holder's job. We have decided against such a change. Ministers and other paid office holders in the House of Commons carry out two quite separate jobs, one as an office holder and the other as a constituency MP. We have concluded that the parliamentary salary should be retained in recognition of this and bear

⁶⁸ See the debate of 11 July 1979, HC Deb vol 970 c.485, speech of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Norman St John Stevas

⁶⁹ See also the Hay report, Section 6 of vol 2

broadly the same relationship to the salary of a backbench MP as we established in 1979. We have framed our recommendations accordingly.

The Government's wishes for the 1983 settlement were not supported by the House,⁷⁰ and the resolution finally accepted on 16 July 1983 set the reduced Parliamentary salary at 67% of the maximum point of the Senior Principal civil service scale (the full salary was set at 89%).⁷¹ This arrangement was carried over the 1987 linkage formula.⁷² Following the 1993 'freeze', a new linkage formula was adopted on 3 November 1993, which is currently in force.⁷³

The current SSRB review contains the following analysis:⁷⁴

42. On taking office, Ministers forgo all salary from non-Parliamentary sources. In addition to their Ministerial salary, Ministers and paid office holders in the House of Commons receive a reduced Parliamentary salary (see Appendix C). This was awarded to all Commons Ministers in 1957, replacing an earlier system whereby Ministers received an allowance for Parliamentary expenses. The salary has always been abated, reflecting a view that Ministerial office limited the MP's ability to undertake Parliamentary activities. The Government in its evidence requested SSRB to consider whether this reduced salary was appropriate.

43. In the course of this review, the opinion widely shared among Ministers, backbenchers and others who gave evidence was that the responsibilities of a Minister to his or her constituents are the same as those of a backbench MP. Hay noted that the constituency obligations of Ministers remain unchanged, and may indeed become more onerous to discharge because of the priorities of office. We consider that since pay should be set to reflect responsibility levels, and a Minister retains the full responsibilities of an MP, there is no reason to abate the Parliamentary salary of Ministers when they take office.

Recommendation 3: that, since Ministers retain the full range of responsibilities as Members of Parliament, they receive the full Parliamentary salary.

See also the analysis by Hay, Cm 330-II, section I, especially the following: [p.10]

It is also important to bear in mind that ministerial office does not mean that the vast majority of the "ordinary" Member's job goes away. On the contrary, the constituency obligations of Ministers -in respect of both casework and promoting its interests generally - remain quite unchanged. Indeed, they may become more burdensome and problematical because of the priorities of office. Some constituents may even have higher expectations of Ministers than of other Members.

⁷⁰ See Chapter 3 of Research Paper 93/98, 2.11.93, pp15-18

⁷¹ HC Deb vol 46 cc1151-4

⁷² See p.19 of Research Paper 93/98

⁷³ See section 2 of Research Paper 96/65, May 1996 and HC Deb vol 231 cc457-84

⁷⁴ Cm 3330-I, July 1996

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In this context it is interesting to note the following advice in *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*:⁷⁵

59. It is wrong in principle for Ministers to use for constituency work facilities provided at public expense to enable them to carry out their public duties. This point of principle is reflected in the entitlement of Ministers to a Parliamentary salary in recognition of the time spent in attending to the interests of their constituents, and to the reimbursement of their secretarial expenses and the expenses of living away from home when attending to constituency business, within the limits prescribed by the Resolution of the House of Commons of 21 July 1987. Ministers should thus have their constituency work done at their own expense, as they would if they were private Members of Parliament.

IV Select Bibliography

In addition to official and Parliamentary reports (such as those by TSRB/SSRB), the following are relevant to issues considered in this Paper:

Parliamentary pay and allowances: the current rates, Research Paper 96/65, 16.5.96.

Members' pay Research Paper 93/98, 2.11.93

Members' office cost allowance, Background Paper 306, 19.11.92.

'Short Money': financial assistance to Opposition parties, Research Paper 93/99, 3.11.93.

The Nolan resolutions, Research Paper 95/118, 23.11.95.

Aspects of Nolan: Parliamentary self-regulation, Research Paper 95/65, 23.5.95.

Aspects of Nolan: Members' financial interests Research Paper 95/62, 16.5.95.

Aspects of Nolan: MPs and lobbying, Research Paper 95/60, 16.5.95.

Sittings reform and the Jopling report, Research Paper 94/96.

D Judge "The politics of MPs' pay" (1984) 37 *Parliamentary Affairs* 59-75

M Rush & M Shaw *The House of Commons: services and facilities* (1974)

M Rush (ed.) *The House of Commons: services and facilities 1972-1982*, 1983, chap.

⁷⁵ May 1992 ed

P Richards *The backbenchers*, 1972 chap 2.

V Pay and allowances - some figures

Table 1, and the accompanying graph, look at the level of Members' pay in payment since salaries were first paid in 1911. One important factor when making comparisons over time is that the Secretarial Allowance - now the Office Costs Allowance - was introduced in 1969. Before then, Members were expected to meet their office expenses from their regular salaries. Levels of the Office Costs Allowance since its introduction are given in Table 4. No account is taken here of any changes there may have been in the tax arrangements for Members' pay.

Also included in Table 1 are salary recommendations by the Top Salaries Review Body in 1975, 1979, 1980 and 1983 - these were not implemented - and the new SSRB recommendation of £43,000. One other proposal, not covered by the table, was one which was agreed by the House in 1975 but never implemented. On 22 July 1975, following the approval by one vote of an amendment tabled by Joe Ashton, George Cunningham and others, the House approved the motion:

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable in principle that the salaries of Members should be regulated to correspond with a point on the scale paid to an Assistant Secretary in the public service, not later than three months after the next General Election, and annually until that date, the salaries of Members should be increased by not less than the same amount of increase as these Assistant Secretaries⁷⁶.

Because the proposal was never implemented, it is impossible to say now where on the Assistant Secretary scale Members' pay might have been. Current ranges for Assistant Secretaries (Grade 5s) include what was formerly performance-related range pay above the old scale maxima that existed in the 1970s so it is unlikely, had the link been maintained, that MPs' pay would have been at the top of the present range. The pay ranges (from 1 August 1995) for Grade 5s ran from £37,400 to £55,802 outside London and from £39,031 to £57,978 in London, but there was not a separate, higher, London scale in 1975⁷⁷.

The present salary of £34,085 is nearly double average earnings in the United Kingdom. In April 1995, the average annual pay of those on adult rates⁷⁸ was about £17,440. There is substantial regional variation in pay, with the lowest average at £15,550 in the Northern region and the highest at £22,850 in Greater London.

⁷⁶ HC Deb vol 896 22.7.75 c511.

⁷⁷ This should not be confused with London weighting which is something different.

⁷⁸ Average gross pay at April 1995 of full-time employees on adult rates whose pay was not affected by absence [*Economic Trends June 1996 page 17*].

Table 2 gives the reduced Parliamentary salary for Ministers since they first had a right, under the Ministerial Salaries Act 1946, to receive part of an MP's salary in recognition of their expenses as Members. The operation in the second half of the 1970s of pay policy, which allowed different maximum pay increases for those at different salary levels, meant that three different rates of the reduced Parliamentary salary were in payment from 1975 to 1980⁷⁹, when the rate was re-unified.

Tables 3a (in cash) and 3b (in constant prices), and an accompanying graph, look at the salaries of Ministers. Ministerial salaries are complicated, with different rates paid to office-holders in the Commons and the Lords. The tables look only at the pay of Commons Ministers, including Parliamentary salaries. Ministerial salaries now paid are, in real terms, considerably below the levels set in 1965 and 1972, with the largest reductions being at senior levels. The SSRB's proposals would increase the pay of Parliamentary Under Secretaries to more than their maximum (in real terms) in the last thirty years, increase the pay of Ministers of State to about the same level as their peak in 1972, but leave the salaries of Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister below their peak levels, once the Parliamentary salary is taken into account.

The Supply Estimates⁸⁰ provide, in 1996-97, for expenditure on Members' salaries etc totalling £76.5 million, an average of about £117,500 per Member. The total includes financial assistance to opposition parties and a grant in aid to the Members' Fund as well as sums in respect of individual Members. The main items under the latter heading are as follows.

£23.7 million for Members' salaries (together with the London supplement and a token amount for the resettlement grant). This equates to an average of nearly £36,400 per Member, including employers' National Insurance contributions.

£29.0 million for the Office Costs Allowance, an average of £44,568 per Member. The total includes provision for temporary secretarial assistance and the enhanced rates of Office Costs Allowance payable to two Members.

£7.5 million for the Additional Costs Allowance (an average of £11,500 per Member);
 £9.7 million for travelling expenses, an average of £14,800 per Member. This includes expenditure on travel warrants, family and staff travel concessions, extended travel and nearly £6.3 million for car travel, an average of £9,650 per Member.

⁷⁹ The actual rate paid depended on whether the recipient had been paid more than £8,500 in 1975-76, when only those paid less than that sum were entitled to pay increases. This had a knock-on effect in subsequent years. Broadly speaking, those who held office in 1975-76 would have received the lowest rates.

⁸⁰ HC 261, 1995-96 Class XVIII, Vote 7.

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£1.8 million pension provision for Members' staff.

£40,000 for secretarial redundancy payments.

£179,000 provision for miscellaneous expenses, including the winding up allowance. Most of the total here is for insurance premiums.

£2.4 million in contributions to the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund.

It is estimated that the increases in pay for **Members and Ministers** proposed by the SSRB would add £7.1 million to their total paybill⁸¹.

⁸¹ Cm 3330-I op cit Appendix E.

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Table 1
Members' pay since 1911

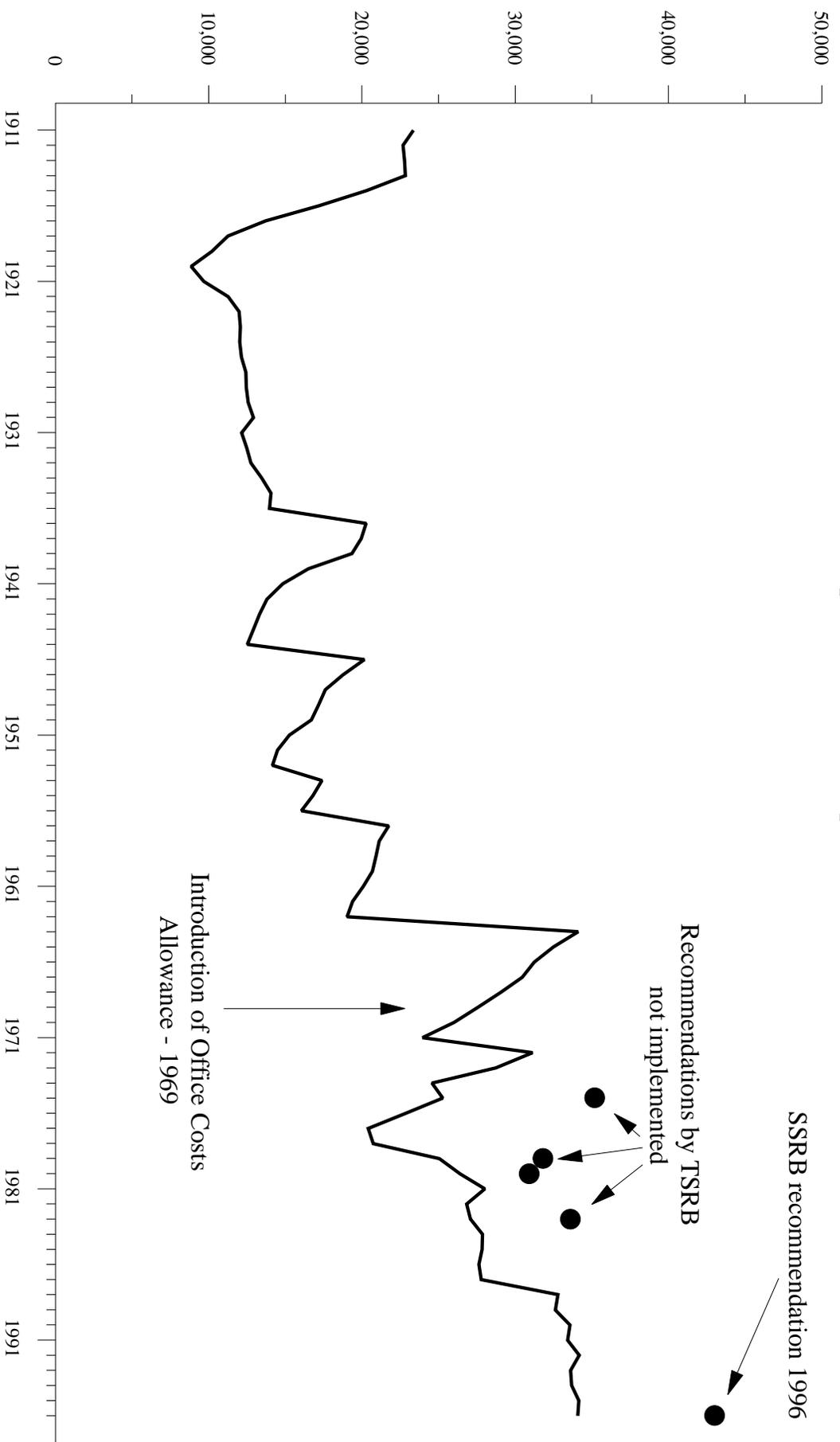
	£ cash	£ at 1996 prices(a)
Actual pay		
August 1911	400	23,500
October 1931	360	12,300
July 1934	380	13,600
July 1935	400	14,300
July 1937	600	20,500
April 1946	1,000	20,400
May 1954 (b)	1,250	17,600
July 1957	1,750	22,000
October 1964	3,250	34,200
January 1972 (c)	4,500	32,200
June 1975	5,750	24,900
June 1976	6,062	23,000
June 1977	6,270	20,200
June 1978	6,897	20,700
June 1979	9,450	25,500
June 1980	11,750	26,200
June 1981	13,950	27,900
June 1982	14,510	26,600
June 1983	15,308	27,100
January 1984	16,106	27,900
January 1985	16,904	27,800
January 1986	17,702	27,600
January 1987	18,500	27,800
January 1988	22,548	32,800
January 1989	24,107	32,600
January 1990	26,701	33,600
January 1991	28,970	33,400
January 1992	30,854	34,200
January 1994	31,687	33,700
January 1995	33,189	34,100
January 1996	34,085	34,100
Other recommendations		
TSRB July 1975	8,000	34,200
TSRB June 1979	12,000	32,400
TSRB June 1980	13,750	30,700
TSRB June 1983	19,000	33,600
SSRB July 1996	43,000	43,000

(a) Converted using the retail price index for dates shown and, for years before 1962, the composite price index (annual averages) described in Research paper 96/18.

(b) Includes sessional allowance of £250.

(c) Secretarial (now office costs allowance) introduced in October 1969.

The real value of MPs' salaries since 1911 £ per annum at 1996 prices



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Table 2
Reduced Parliamentary salary for Ministers

	£ cash (a)		£ at 1996 prices (b)	
April 1946	500		10,200	
July 1957	750		9,400	
October 1964	1,250		13,200	
January 1972	3,000		21,400	
June 1975	3,000	to 3,700	13,000	to 16,000
June 1976	3,000	to 4,012	11,400	to 15,200
June 1977	3,208	to 4,222	10,400	to 13,600
June 1978	3,529	to 4,642	10,600	to 13,900
June 1979	5,265	to 5,820	14,200	to 15,700
June 1980	6,930		15,500	
June 1981	8,130		16,300	
June 1982	8,460		15,500	
June 1983	9,543		16,900	
January 1984	10,626		18,400	
January 1985	11,709		19,300	
January 1986	12,792		20,000	
January 1987	13,875		20,800	
January 1988	16,911		24,600	
January 1989	18,148		24,600	
January 1990	20,101		25,300	
January 1991	21,809		25,200	
January 1992	23,227		25,700	
January 1994	23,854		25,400	
January 1995	24,985		25,700	
January 1996	25,660		25,700	

(a) Between 1975 and 1980, three different rates of pay applied as a result of the operation of pay policies.

(b) Converted using the retail price index for dates shown and, for years before 1962, the composite price index (annual averages) described in Research Paper 96/18.

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Table 3a
Salaries for Ministers in Commons since 1965
£ cash

	Excluding Parliamentary salary				Including Parliamentary salary (c)			
	Prime Minister (a)	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State (b)	Parly Under Secretary	Prime Minister (a)	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State (b)	Parly Under Secretary
April 1965	14,000	8,500	5,625	3,750	15,250	9,750	6,875	5,000
April 1972	20,000	13,000	7,500	5,500	23,000	16,000	10,500	8,500
May 1975	20,000	13,000	7,500	5,500	23,000	16,000	10,500	8,500
June 1976	20,000	13,000	7,500	5,500	23,000	16,000	10,500	8,500
June 1977	20,000	13,000	7,500	5,500	23,208	16,208	10,708	8,708
July 1978	22,000	14,300	8,250	6,050	25,529	17,829	11,779	9,579
July 1979	33,000	19,650	12,625	9,525	38,265	24,915	17,890	14,790
July 1980	34,650	23,500	16,250	12,350	41,580	30,430	23,180	19,280
June 1981	36,725	27,825	19,775	15,100	44,855	35,955	27,905	23,230
June 1982	38,200	28,950	20,575	15,700	46,660	37,410	29,035	24,160
July 1983	38,987	29,367	20,867	15,917	48,530	38,910	30,410	25,460
January 1984	40,424	30,304	21,364	16,154	51,050	40,930	31,990	26,780
January 1985	41,891	31,271	21,881	16,411	53,600	42,980	33,590	28,120
January 1986	43,328	32,208	22,378	16,648	56,120	45,000	35,170	29,440
January 1987	44,775	33,145	22,875	16,885	58,650	47,020	36,750	30,760
January 1988	45,787	34,157	23,887	17,897	62,698	51,068	40,798	34,808
January 1989	46,109	34,479	24,209	18,219	64,257	52,627	42,357	36,367
January 1990	46,750	35,120	24,850	18,860	66,851	55,221	44,951	38,961
January 1991	50,724	38,105	26,962	20,463	72,533	59,914	48,771	42,272
January 1992	53,007	39,820	28,175	21,384	76,234	63,047	51,402	44,611
January 1994	54,438	40,895	28,936	21,961	78,292	64,749	52,790	45,815
January 1995	57,018	42,834	30,307	23,002	82,003	67,819	55,292	47,987
January 1996	58,557	43,991	31,125	23,623	84,217	69,651	56,785	49,283
July 1996 - recommendation	100,000	60,000	31,125	23,623	143,000	103,000	74,125	66,623

(a) The figures shown here are the full entitlement. In 1979 the Prime Minister chose to forego any increase and from 1980 to 1991 accepted the same salary as a Cabinet Minister in the Commons.

(b) There were two pay levels for Ministers of State until 1980. The lower is shown here.

(c) Between 1975 and 1980, three different rates of pay applied as a result of the operation of pay policies. The lowest rate payable is included here. When dates of increases differ from those of Ministers' pay, the rate in force for the majority of the year is given

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Table 3b
Salaries for Ministers in Commons since 1965
£ at 1996 prices (a)

	Excluding Parliamentary salary				Including Parliamentary salary (d)			
	Prime Minister (b)	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State (c)	Parly Under Secretary	Prime Minister (b)	Cabinet Minister	Minister of State (c)	Parly Under Secretary
April 1965	142,100	86,300	57,100	38,100	154,800	98,900	69,800	50,700
April 1972	140,500	91,300	52,700	38,600	161,600	112,400	73,800	59,700
May 1975	88,100	57,300	33,000	24,200	101,300	70,500	46,300	37,500
June 1976	76,000	49,400	28,500	20,900	87,400	60,800	39,900	32,300
June 1977	64,500	42,000	24,200	17,800	74,900	52,300	34,600	28,100
July 1978	65,800	42,800	24,700	18,100	76,400	53,300	35,200	28,600
July 1979	85,400	50,800	32,700	24,600	99,000	64,400	46,300	38,300
July 1980	76,600	52,000	35,900	27,300	92,000	67,300	51,300	42,600
June 1981	73,600	55,700	39,600	30,200	89,900	72,000	55,900	46,500
June 1982	70,100	53,100	37,800	28,800	85,600	68,600	53,300	44,300
July 1983	68,700	51,700	36,700	28,000	85,500	68,500	53,500	44,800
January 1984	69,900	52,400	37,000	27,900	88,300	70,800	55,300	46,300
January 1985	69,000	51,500	36,000	27,000	88,300	70,800	55,300	46,300
January 1986	67,600	50,300	34,900	26,000	87,600	70,200	54,900	45,900
January 1987	67,300	49,800	34,400	25,400	88,100	70,600	55,200	46,200
January 1988	66,600	49,700	34,700	26,000	91,200	74,300	59,300	50,600
January 1989	62,400	46,700	32,800	24,700	86,900	71,200	57,300	49,200
January 1990	58,800	44,100	31,200	23,700	84,000	69,400	56,500	49,000
January 1991	58,500	44,000	31,100	23,600	83,700	69,100	56,300	48,800
January 1992	58,700	44,100	31,200	23,700	84,400	69,800	56,900	49,400
January 1994	57,900	43,500	30,800	23,300	83,200	68,800	56,100	48,700
January 1995	58,700	44,100	31,200	23,700	84,400	69,800	56,900	49,400
January 1996	58,557	43,991	31,125	23,623	84,217	69,651	56,785	49,283
July 1996 - recommendation	100,000	60,000	31,125	23,623	143,000	103,000	74,125	66,623

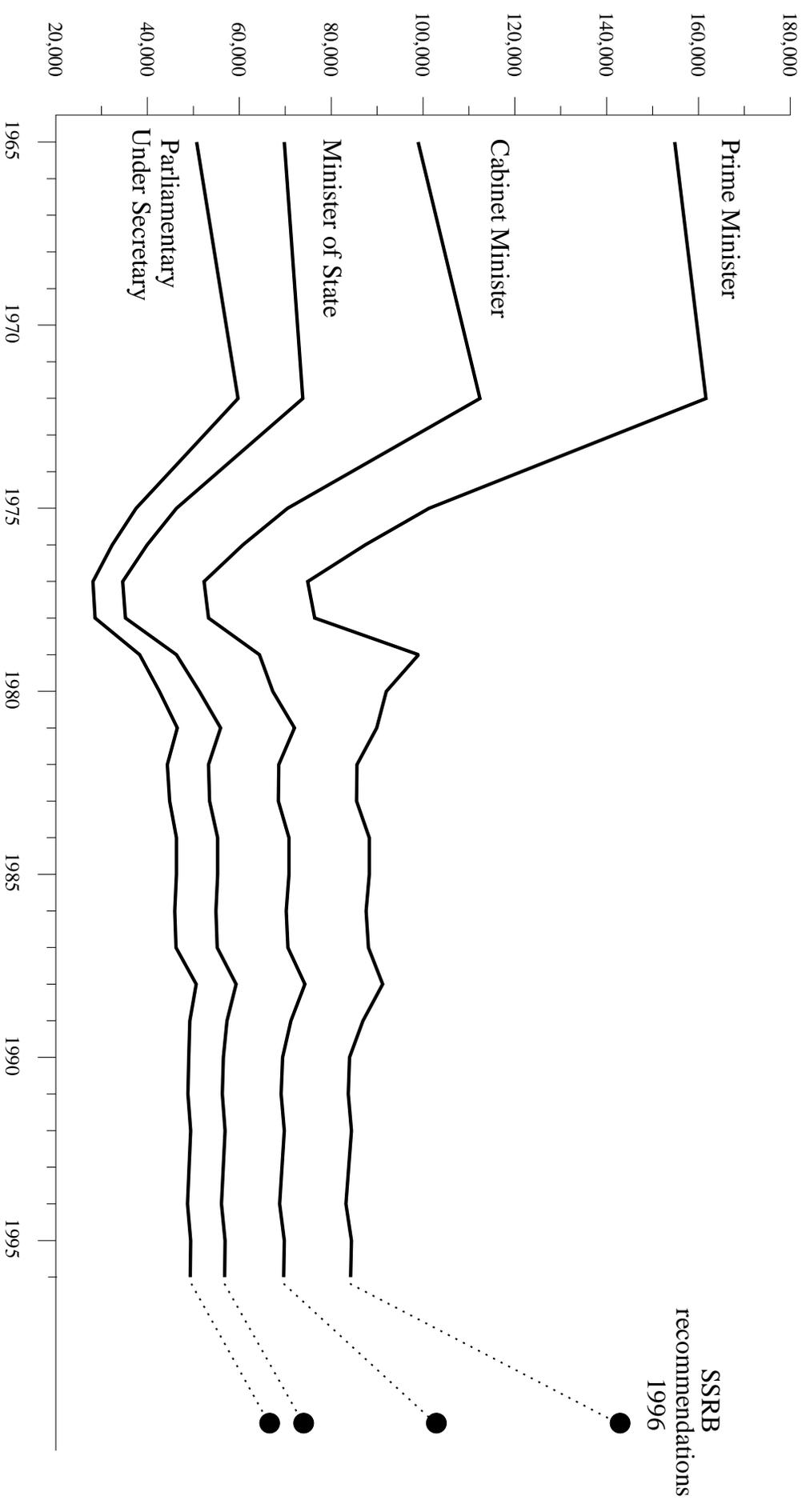
(a) Converted using the retail price index for dates shown.

(b) The figures shown here are the full entitlement. In 1979 the Prime Minister chose to forego any increase and from 1980 to 1991 accepted the same salary as a Cabinet Minister in the Commons.

(c) There were two pay levels for Ministers of State until 1980. The lower is shown here.

(d) Between 1975 and 1980, three different rates of pay applied as a result of the operation of pay policies. The lowest rate payable is included here. When dates of increases differ from those of Ministers' pay, the rate in force for the majority of the year is given.

Ministers' salaries since 1965
£ per annum at 1996 prices
including Parliamentary salary



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Table 4
Office Costs Allowance - maximum level

	£ cash	£ at 1996 prices(a)
October 1969	500	4,340
January 1972	1,000	7,260
April 1974	1,750	9,930
April 1975	3,200	14,920
June 1976	3,512	13,550
June 1977	3,687	12,090
June 1978	4,200	12,820
June 1979	4,600	12,610
February 1980	6,750	16,330
June 1980	8,000	18,130
June 1981	8,480	17,260
June 1982	8,820	16,440
June 1983	11,364	20,440
June 1984	12,437	21,280
April 1985	13,211	21,270
April 1986	20,140	31,470
April 1987	21,302	31,930
April 1988	22,588	32,580
April 1989	24,903	33,250
April 1990	27,166	33,140
April 1991	28,986	33,230
April 1992	39,960	43,930
April 1993	40,380	43,830
April 1994	41,308	43,710
April 1995	42,754	43,790
April 1996	43,908	43,908
July 1996 - recommendation	46,363	46,363

(a) Using retail price index for middle of month shown.

VI Parliamentary business

Table 1: HOUSE OF COMMONS - BUSINESS STATISTICS

Session	Sitting days	Average length of day	Summer recess length	Questions	Public Bills introduced	Ministerial statements	Divisions	EDMs	Standing Committee Sessions	Dept. Select Committee meetings
1974*	87	8:28	-		86		109	245		
1974/75	198	9:20	45		183		405	759		
1975/76	191	9:13	44		174		432	701		
1976/77	149	9:10	62		141		234	475		
1977/78	169	8:48	56		143		324	611		
1978/79*	86	8:35	-		121		110	368		
1979/80**	244	8:55	59+54		217		500	907	464	601
1980/81	163	9:07	54		145		317	631	313	497
1981/82	174	8:08	54		143		332	716	300	545
1982/83*	115	8:34	-		134		146	502	260	414
1983/84**	213	8:59	59+56		181	134	482	1,058	424	474
1984/85	172	9:06	59		167	112	307	979	224	496
1985/86	172	8:57	60		172	113	310	1,261	375	509
1986/87*	109	8:32	-		128	52	165	999	176	310

Session	Sitting days	Average length of day	Summer recess length	Questions	Public Bills introduced	Ministerial statements	Divisions	EDMs	Standing Committee Sessions	Dept. Select Committee meetings
1987/88**	218	9:00	61+56	72,666	168	101	496	1,600	454	423
1988/89	175	9:04	55	63,472	178	79	409	1,414	327	467
1989/90	167	8:48	53	66,045	162	68	345	1,478	454	426
1990/91	160	8:35	55	37,664	171	90	233	1,283	208	422
1991/92*	83	8:23	-	18,433	97	39	113	860	120	240
1992/93**	240	8:03	65+60	63,684	215	97	402	2,574	246	674
1993/94	154	8:10	60	45,610	141	46	339	1,691	237	578
1994/95	159	8:16	61	49,897	151	52	239	1,575	209	582

* short session

** long session (ie had two summer recesses)

Sources:- *Sessional Returns, Polis database.*

Prepared by Janet Seaton, Reference and Reader Services Section

Table 2 analyses the number of attendances by Members at select and standing committees in the 1994-95 session. Members who died during the session or who were elected at by-elections are not included. It can be seen that more than one in five Members did not attend standing committees at all; many of these are senior Ministers and members of the Opposition front bench, ex-Cabinet Ministers and other senior MPs. More than half of all Members made five or fewer appearances at select committees, for which there are, of course, limited places available.

Tables 3 and 4 look at the volume of legislation over the last quarter century. Table 3 shows the number of public Acts passed and the number of Statutory Instruments made in each year. Consolidation Acts distort this picture somewhat so they are shown separately. Table 2 gives the number of printed pages of Acts and SIs (the figures are somewhat approximate). Changes in the paper size and typeface used for legislation in 1987 mean that direct comparisons over the whole period are not possible but included in Table 2 are some (crude) figures which adjust the pre-1987 figures to make them broadly comparable with the more recent numbers.

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Table 2
Attendances at Standing and Select Committees, 1994/95

Number of attendances	Number of Members	%
Standing Committees		
0	141	21.8%
1	53	8.2%
2	59	9.1%
3	57	8.8%
4	34	5.3%
5	25	3.9%
6 to 10	66	10.2%
11 to 20	82	12.7%
21 to 30	76	11.8%
31 to 40	25	3.9%
41 to 50	20	3.1%
51 or more	8	1.2%
Average attendances	9.9	
Select Committees		
0	326	50.5%
1	10	1.5%
2	4	0.6%
3	4	0.6%
4	6	0.9%
5	10	1.5%
6 to 10	14	2.2%
11 to 20	83	12.8%
21 to 30	95	14.7%
31 to 40	55	8.5%
41 to 50	19	2.9%
51 or more	20	3.1%
Average attendances	12.5	
Select and Standing Committees		
0	83	12.8%
1	35	5.4%
2	25	3.9%
3	29	4.5%
4	23	3.6%
5	12	1.9%
6 to 10	43	6.7%
11 to 20	92	14.2%
21 to 30	105	16.3%
31 to 40	88	13.6%
41 to 50	43	6.7%
51 or more	68	10.5%
Average attendances	22.4	

Source: *Sessional Returns*

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Table 3
Numbers of Public General Acts and Statutory Instruments
1970 to 1995

	Acts (a)	of which, Consolidation	non- Consolidation Acts	Statutory Instruments (b)
1970	58	3	55	2,044
1971	81	10	71	2,178
1972	80	8	72	2,077
1973	69	4	65	2,236
1974	58	6	52	2,227
1975	83	16	67	2,251
1976	86	11	75	2,248
1977	53	5	48	2,202
1978	59	9	50	1,977
1979	60	16	44	1,770
1980	68	13	55	2,051
1981	72	12	60	1,892
1982	57	7	50	1,900
1983	60	8	52	1,965
1984	62	11	51	2,072
1985	76	11	65	2,080
1986	68	4	64	2,344
1987	57	1	56	2,278
1988	55	6	49	2,311
1989	46	3	43	2,503
1990	46	4	42	2,667
1991	69	6	63	2,953
1992	61	10	51	3,359
1993	52	9	43	3,276
1994	41	3	38	3,334
1995	53	6	47	3,345

(a) Not including Stormont Acts (34 in 1970, 39 in 1971 and 15 in 1972).

(b) Not including Northern Ireland Statutory Rules.

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Table 4
Pages of Public General Acts and Statutory Instruments, 1970 to 1995

	As printed			Adjusted (d)		
	Consolidation Acts (a)	non- Acts	Statutory Instruments (b)	Acts (a)	non- Acts	Statutory Instruments (b)
1970	1,509	703	6,627	1,110	520	4,880
1971	2,107	1,383	6,317	1,550	1,020	4,650
1972	2,527	1,836	6,170	1,860	1,350	4,540
1973	2,248	2,043	8,029	1,650	1,500	5,910
1974	1,875	1,553	8,668	1,380	1,140	6,380
1975	2,800	1,974	8,442	2,060	1,450	6,210
1976	2,096	1,703	6,278	1,540	1,250	4,620
1977	1,288	911	6,219	950	670	4,580
1978	1,481	1,040	5,858	1,090	770	4,310
1979	1,435	803	4,719	1,060	590	3,470
1980	2,866	1,791	7,390	2,110	1,320	5,440
1981	2,276	1,701	6,521	1,670	1,250	4,800
1982	2,072	1,666	5,533	1,520	1,230	4,070
1983	1,420	824	6,405	1,040	610	4,710
1984	2,876	1,783	6,060	2,120	1,310	4,460
1985	3,233	1,812	6,476	2,380	1,330	4,760
1986	2,780	2,310	9,048	2,050	1,700	6,660
1987	1,538	1,269	6,266	1,538	1,269	6,266
1988	3,403	2,047	6,295	3,403	2,047	6,295
1989	2,489	2,397	6,621	2,489	2,397	6,621
1990	2,391	1,722	6,550	2,391	1,722	6,550
1991	2,254	1,568	7,626	2,254	1,568	7,626
1992	2,697	1,207	8,960	2,697	1,207	8,960
1993	2,645	2,041	7,944	2,645	2,041	7,944
1994	2,335	2,005	..	2,335	2,005	..
1995 (c)	2,936	2,191	..	2,936	2,191	..

(a) Not including Stormont Acts (586 pages in 1970, 566 in 1971 and 310 in 1972).

(b) Not including Northern Ireland Statutory Rules.

(c) Provisional.

(d) Adjusted (crudely) for change in size of page and typeface used.

Sources: *HC Deb* 6.6.84 c167W; 14.5.85 c89W; 4.3.91 c33W

HL Deb 4.5.95 c WA 125

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