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**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

First Report

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*Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed
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HC637-Standards in Public Life

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 1994-95

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KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Tuesday 6th June 1995

Standards in Public Life,—*Ordered*, That a Select Committee of eleven Members be appointed to consider the First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Cm. 2850) so far as it relates to the rules and procedures of the House; to advise on how its recommendations relating thereto might be clarified and implemented; and to recommend specific Resolutions for decision by the House;

That the Committee shall report as soon as possible and shall in any event make an interim report not later than Friday 7th July;

That five be the Quorum of the Committee;

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records; to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House; and to report from time to time;

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference.—(*Mr. Simon Burns.*)

Tuesday 13th June 1995

Standards in Public Life,—*Ordered*, That Mr Quentin Davies, Mr Iain Duncan Smith, Mr John Evans, Sir Archibald Hamilton, Sir Terence Higgins, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Mr Robert MacLennan, Mr John Morris, Mr Tony Newton, Mr Stanley Orme and Mrs Ann Taylor be members of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life.—(*Mr Derek Conway.*)

Mr Tony Newton was elected Chairman on 15th June 1995.



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FIRST REPORT

The Select Committee on Standards in Public Life has agreed to the following Report:

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The Prime Minister announced the setting up of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) in the House of Commons on Tuesday 25 October 1994 with the following terms of reference:

“To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities, and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life.

For these purposes, public life should include Ministers, civil servants and advisers, Members of Parliament and UK Members of the European Parliament, members and senior officers of all non-departmental public bodies and of national health service bodies, non-ministerial office holders, members and other senior officers of other bodies discharging publicly-funded functions, and elected members and senior officers of local authorities.”¹

2. The first Report of the Nolan Committee, covering Members of Parliament, ex-Ministers' business appointments and quangos was published on 12 May 1995. It was the subject of a debate in the House on 18 May 1995.

3. The House has *not* yet agreed to the conclusions of the Nolan Report, even in general terms. The debate on 18 May took place on the adjournment, and a wide range of views was expressed. We were appointed on 13 June with specific instructions to “consider the First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life so far as it relates to the rules and procedures of the House; to advise on how the recommendations relating thereto might be clarified and implemented and to recommend specific Resolutions for decision by the House”. We were also asked to “report as soon as possible”, and in any event to “make an interim report not later than Friday 7 July” (a non-sitting day).

4. Between Thursday 15 June and Thursday 6 July we met on 14 occasions, out of a possible 14 sitting days.

5. It would have been totally impractical to take evidence in the normal way in the three weeks available to us. We did, however, receive a memorandum from the Clerk of the House on the procedural and practical implications of the Nolan recommendations.²

6. This is an *interim* Report, which was what the House instructed us to produce by 7 July. We propose to make a further Report to the House before the Committee's life expires at the end of the Session. In that Report, we will review any further progress made towards resolving the outstanding issues and we will make a recommendation to the House as to whether it would be sensible to re-appoint this Committee in the new Session.

THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS

Nolan recommendation:

“The House should appoint a person of independent standing, who should have a degree of tenure and not be a career member of the House of Commons staff, as Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.”

7. Although this proposal is described by Nolan under the heading “on procedure” and it comes at the end of the list of recommendations, we regard it as fundamental, and one on which the House must take a decision at an early stage since it will determine the whole ethos of the House's future rules and procedures on conduct, and in practical terms will affect the timing of many changes.

¹ Hansard 25 October 1994, col. 758.

² Evidence, p.1.