Published on *Adam Smith Institute* (http://www.adamsmith.org)

Just how out of touch are MPs? [1]

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There's something of a tradition in American politics of tripping up politicians by asking them how much milk costs, or a loaf of bread. When their answer is out by 100 percent or more they can thus be portrayed as hopelessly out of touch, pampered inside their bubble of privilege and thus not worthy to rule.

At the risk of being yet another person to pile in upon Derek Conway, might I point you to this report [3]?

> *He* (Conway) *also complained that MPs are paid ?less than the sous-chef at the Commons? and said their salaries should be raised to £100,000 a year from £60,675.*

Now as someone who has worked in the catering trade I would be extraordinarily surprised if the sous-chef at the Commons was paid more than £60,675 a year. In fact, as someone whose brother had to move to Kabul to make £50,000 a year as a Head Chef (there is, as you might not be surprised to find out, a certain amount of a danger allowance in that) I'd be absolutely flabberghasted to find out that salaries were so high. Unfortunately, the Common's catering side [4] appears to have no job vacancies at present so I can't check their offers, although the general conditions do look good [5].

A senior sous-chef at a tony sorta place [6] makes some £30,000 in London. Or a little further down [7] the (*ahem*) food chain, £25,000. Or £26,000 [8]. Or £22,000-£25,000 [9]. Or £20,000 to £22,000 [10].

I fear that the Honourable Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup is going to have something of a rude awakening when he rejoins the real economy immediately after the next election. Something of a pity of course that he wasn't more informed about conditions in that real economy while he was still likely to remain in Parliament.

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