

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 71 (2005)
Heft: [5]

Rubrik: [Impressum]

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Editorial

Well ..., I say!!! Talk about the hound (the Governments' own legislation) turning around and biting its' master in the ---, backside!!!

So, that staunch pillar of the Labour Party and one of its' longest serving MP's up to the end of last year, when he was appointed New Zealand High Commissioner in London, Jonathan Hunt, is reported to have inquired with British Social Services about a small British pension he may be entitled to while living in Britain. He is reported to be on an annual salary of \$125,000.00 to \$162,000.00. On top of that he gets \$77,000.00 per year out of the parliamentary super fund, which is, I believe 2/3rds taxpayer funded. These parliamentary super payments are for the whole life of the

recipient, but would vary greatly as they depend on the length of service as an MP. When Mr Hunt returns to live in New Zealand he will also qualify for New Zealand National Super, but not, apparently, while living overseas, even though he's working for the New Zealand Government and presumably, paying income tax to our government, not Britain. And herein lies the crux of the matter as I see it.

My first reaction to this news about Mr Hunt was the same as everyone else, "what a greedy so-and-so", I thought!!! Until I read another more detailed article in the 'paper a couple of days later. Hey, wait a minute! Mr Hunt does not get New Zealand National Super payments while he is living overseas? Even though he is working for our

Government and thus, I assume, for all of us? I could not believe my eyes at first! I always thought everyone is entitled to New Zealand Super on reaching 65 years of age, and working for a New Zealand employer, inside or outside New Zealand, as long as they are New Zealand citizens and pay income tax to the New Zealand Government. Apparently I was very wrong!!! Apparently there exists a reciprocal agreement between the New Zealand and British governments regarding super payments to each others' superannuitants while living in each others' country, similar to the agreement with Australia and maybe one or two other countries as well, but not Switzerland, as far as I'm aware of at present.

So why all the hue and cry against Mr Hunt, primarily out of the Beehive!!! After all, he was only looking into what was legally due to him by the laws of both Nations! I have yet to hear of even one MP who does not take every dollar of their fat salaries, fat allowances, and when they leave, (after six years) generous taxpayer subsidised and tax-free parliamentary superannuation for life, as well as the taxed New Zealand super, which is all most of us get, this last-mentioned one!!!

So, one can see how hugely generous all our MP's are to themselves!!! "But we don't decide our own salaries, That's done by the Parliamentary Salaries Commission," they all protest loudly. Oh yeh, and who appoints these Commissioners, who are likewise on a good salary? Not us voters out there.

To quote a famous Englishman : "Yes, I'm certain all that hot air huffing out of the Beehive had little to do with Jonathan Hunts' perceived indiscretion in London! It was all about all opposition parties getting every last metre of political mileage out of this Labour-led governments' very obvious discomfort over this whole affair!!! And who can blame them, from their point of view, with a general election almost on our doorstep!!!

Well, we'll try to get this issue to you before the AGM in Hamilton, so, see you all there!!!

Cheerio from Paul

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