

For Release:

00 08 02 0001h

**Pension freezing cheats elderly out of more than £50,000**

A new survey of a sample of Britain's frozen pensioners confirms that the most poverty-stricken pensioners will be found among the 460,000 frozen pensioners living primarily in Commonwealth countries. They are the only UK state pensioners who have never received their full pension entitlement since the first year of retirement in a frozen country.

In response to the just completed inquiry into Pensioner Poverty held by the UK Social Security Select Committee, a submission by the World Alliance of British Expatriate Pensioners included a survey of some 13 pensioners who have each been short-changed as much as **£54,000**. The pensioners, most more than 80 years old, have had to be supported with some family help where it was available and affordable, with some limited social assistance from their host country in the case of some countries, by taking an extra job or by suffering the extreme financial hardship without any outside help from family or host country. Ten of those surveyed live in South Africa but three had moved to Canada to be close to family members during their post retirement years. The surveyed pensioners are heavily or totally reliant on pensions as low as **£4.16/week**.

As with many thousands of others within the ranks of the frozen pensioners, most of those surveyed made significant contributions and personal sacrifices to the war effort for Britain during World War II. They are particularly bitter at their financial treatment by successive British Governments.

In most frozen countries, social security support is either non-existent or quite limited. Consequently, many of the financially-strapped frozen pensioners have to rely on the good will and financial sacrifice of families or friends and even charitable and/or social agencies to help them subsist with desperately low pension benefits from Britain. The longer they live, the worse becomes their financial plight.

All of the frozen pensioners are discriminated against by Britain. Although they all paid into the mandatory, contributory pension scheme on an equal basis during their working life while living in Britain, they have never received any annual uprating since receiving their first UK state pension benefit payment in a frozen country. The remaining 11 million pensioners living in the UK and some 35 countries abroad have always received an annual uprating designed to help them cope with ever-increasing living expenses. The current full rate of pension they receive weekly is £67.50 for a single person and £107.90 for a married couple. Britain is the only OECD country which discriminates against any of its pensioners in this way.

Some 36,000 of the frozen pensioners live in South Africa and many other countries where no social security benefits are provided. The new survey clearly illustrates the terrible financial impact pension freezing is having on hundreds of thousands of expatriates living in South Africa, Zimbabwe and many other countries around the world.

A spokesperson for the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners said: "Britain continues to force increasing financial hardship on those of its state pensioners who, for various reasons, are living

in 48 of the 53 Commonwealth countries. Britain has never paid any uprating to their pensioners living in countries such as Canada, Grenada, Trinidad - but pay their pensioners living in the United States, Germany or in Bosnia Herzegovina on the same basis as all their other pensioners. What a terrible personal price elderly expatriate pensioners pay for Commonwealth membership. How shameful and totally uncaring of the British Government to continue to treat some of its pensioners in this disgraceful way.”

#30#

#### MEDIA/CONTACT Information:

The summary of the survey of impoverished pensioners is included in the submission to the Pensioner Poverty Inquiry made by The World Alliance of British Expatriate Pensioners. This may be downloaded from the Canadian Alliance website: [www.britishpensions.com](http://www.britishpensions.com)  
Media contacts who would like a copy by e-mail may contact the Canadian Alliance.

If you would like to interview any of the individuals listed, please get in touch with the contact in the country of residence. They will attempt to put media representatives in touch with them:

**Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners:** Please contact-  
Douglas Ross, President,  
Ph: 1(416) 929 5494  
E-mail: [raidr@pathcom.com](mailto:raidr@pathcom.com) or through  
[info@britishpensions.com](mailto:info@britishpensions.com)  
(London time -5 hours)

**South African Alliance of British Pensioners:** Charles Poole, President  
Please contact-  
Esme Solomons  
Ph: 27(11) 787 3439  
E-mail: [ehms@netactive.co.za](mailto:ehms@netactive.co.za)  
(London time +2 hours)

From the (internet) press announcement, the **Social Security Select Committee:**

The Seventh Report of Session 1999-2000 from the Social Security Select Committee HC 606, on Pensioner Poverty, is being published on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August at 10.30am. The Chairman will hold a press conference at that time in Committee Room 16 at the House of Commons.

There will be no advance copies of the Report. Copies of the Report are to be available at the press conference. Government Departments and those who gave written and oral evidence will be sent copies at that time.

The Social Security Select Committee advise that you may reach them through Miss Leslie Young: phone (207) 219 5833