An open letter for the attention of any MP that voted down the motion to supply free meals for school children over the Christmas holidays,

I am speaking on behalf of many and we are bamboozled.

The past few years under the incumbent Government has been a litany of disasters: the COVID response, the Windrush question, Grenfell, the approach to climate change, the inability to deal with racial (and other) prejudices, the deceit over Brexit, the appalling state of the Universal Credit system, a stubbornness to not consider a basic living wage, and the news that a £3000 pay-rise for politicians is being considered.

However, the events of October 21st of this year in which a campaign to give free meals to school children was voted down, was the proverbial straw. If I’m a camel, I’ve gotten the hump. I am messaging in the hope of ascertaining a reason for this vote, without any political obfuscation as an explanation.

I am wondering where the empathy has gone. Marcus Rashford has done a commendable job of highlighting a problem that affects children all over the country. To not feel any empathy over this plight is bordering on the sociopathic. Children without sufficient food is not a political issue. It’s an issue of decency and humanity.

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 states that one of its goals is to “… prevent … all forms of under-nutrition in school-age children and adolescents.” It’s an indictment that we even need a law to tell us this.

As mentioned, this vote is one of many deplorable actions taken by the Government recently. However, I would like it to be considered on its own for the moment. I believe it is indicative of wider, institutional problems, but for now the focus is on this vote and nothing else. I would like it also to be removed from the context of any ‘good works’ you may have done as a politician. They are not the issue here. The issue I am referring to is a stand-alone one for the purpose of this email.

You took this vote. Amongst so many questions, I want to understand why. Was it even your choice or was there party pressure? Was it a question of money? If so, was that financial consideration more important in the long run than the welfare of the nation’s children? As I understand it, the sum required would be around £20m a week, which even without being an economist I know is totally feasible for this Government. Surely one could simply ask Richard Branson for it and he wouldn’t notice a difference to his bank balance? And what about poor Stuart Andrew, who seems to have been the proxy for many of your votes? I sincerely hope this was because there were more pressing matters to attend to, rather than the fact that you couldn’t be asked to make the journey.

I will not apologise for the manner in which this email has been sent. For every politician researched, there seems to be a different set of rules as to how to contact, but I quite frankly haven’t the time or respect to follow these. Niceties dwindle in importance when compared to the safety and health of the UK’s children. Playing by your rules has gotten us into this mess.

In the 2019 General Election, one of the Conservative Party’s slogans was ‘Britain Deserves Better.’ Not only do we deserve better, we deserve and demand an answer to how this action of allowing children to starve is justifiable, especially in the light of MPs having food & drink paid for them as expenses.

The vote of October 21st 2020 (322 to 261) makes a mockery of the Tory Government’s intentions. Where is the ‘better’ in this? That isn’t rhetorical, it’s a question I would like answered.

We vote the Government in. They are ours. They serve us. You, as a politician, are a member of that Government and need to be held accountable for your actions. We have leading members of society, such as the exemplary Marcus Rashford, who are willing to use their platforms for the good of people. Maybe we need to change our leaders. Maybe we need more of the kind of people who genuinely represent us.

My last two questions are combined into one: how and why did this motion fail? How did a majority of people think that it was alright to allow children of poor, disadvantaged families to starve? The ‘why’ is almost more important as it will help us get to the bottom of a systemic problem. This display of activism is borne of wishing to understand those that govern us, for they do not currently reflect me or my beliefs.

I, and the many others that I write on behalf of, are seeking justification as to why you voted the way you did. I live in hope that the spirit of this action does not represent your Christmas spirit. You work for us, remember, and you are offending so many of us with your choices. I would like to stress that this message is not written from a place of vitriol, I merely want an explanation. This is not a personal attack on you, it is a personal act of inquisitiveness.

The answers we are all looking for are ones of simplicity and clarity.

I expect a reply. Your silence will be deafening otherwise.