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What It Costs to Be An M.P.

Some people imagine that an M.P. soon gets back his election expenses by drawing a salary of £400 per annum, but they overlook the fact that he is deemed a political orange for the purpose of being sucked by his constituents. Here is a sample letter received by a certain member of Parliament:—

"Sir.—We are the brass band of— and we played in honour of your being elected; but a little girl sat on the drum and stove it in, and we should be very grateful if you would present us with a new one."

The M.P. has described this as the funniest begging letter he ever received.

While one can fully appreciate the humour of the mislaid, it also serves to illustrate what one M.P. has described as the "amazing cheek" of people who think that because a man has been elected to the House of Commons it is permissible for every needy constituent and local charity and club to "sponge" on him for funds.

"There is nothing in the world a member is not expected to subscribe to." His trouble began the moment his name is made public as a candidate for Parliamentary honours, and the longer he is obliged to nurse the constituency the more money it costs him. One member states that during his first year as a candidate he expended about £750 in donations and subscriptions over and above his customary charities, and in the second year between £1,500 and £1,700. He flattered himself that he had acted quite handsomely, until he overheard a remark to the effect that the reason he was not successful in the election was because he was so "horribly stingy!"

And yet, together with the election expenses, he had spent well over £3,000. The writer further adds that he knows one member who pays away about £4,000 annually in subscriptions to local clubs, charities, etc.

The Bribery Act states that a candidate shall not make large charitable payments with a view to corrupting the mind of the elector. It would be interesting to know, in view of the £4,000 a year which the member mentioned spends, what is meant by "large charitable payments." As a matter of fact, the Bribery Act is regarded by a great number of M.P.'s as a farce.

In some constituencies—not many—if a candidate or member refused to lend his aid to local clubs, mothers' meetings, and children's bun-fights he would quickly lose a great deal of support. Then there are such things as dinners, garden parties, prize distributions, etc., which the member or prospective member is expected to attend. One London member has estimated that the train and cab fares and carriage hire in connection with such affairs cost him £197 during the few months he was nursing his constituency previous to his election. The morning after he had been invited to contest the seat he received a call at his hotel from a clergyman, who in one breath congratulated the prospective member and said he was badly in want of funds. The result was that a cheque for twelve guineas changed hands, for the candidate had been advised to conciliate the reverend gentleman.

Altogether this Metropolitan member spent £1,000 in preliminary election expenses, and estimates that his average cost per year for nursing the constituency is about £800. So that, supposing the member remains in Parliament for five years, he will have spent £4,000 for the pleasure of adding the letters "M.P." after his name, and have received just half of it back as salary.

Re-charting the Seas.

Within the next few weeks, in a room at the Office of Works, the seas of the world will be largely re-charted. The International Hydrographic Conference has assembled there under the presidency of Rear-Admiral Sir J. F. Parry, Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, the First Sea Lord, welcomed the delegates, who are chiefly naval officers representing all maritime countries except those with whom we have been at war. Admiral Parry emphasised the enormous possibilities of the use of directional wireless and of hydrophones for sound ranging under water. The accuracy obtained in the use of the hydrophone, he said, was marvellous.

The Celebrated Knocker

(By BERT MOSES, in Newspaperdom.)

It is time for some one to say a kind word about the "knocker," for the knocker is knocked down more than any other gent there is. Call a man a "knocker," and that settles it—he is anathema and even worse. Recently somebody sent me the following, the inference not being exactly plain, for maybe it was meant to apply to me, and I hope it was:

"Some one has said that when the Creator had made all the good things, there remained some dirty work to do. So He made the beasts and reptiles and poisonous insects, and when He had finished He had some scraps that were too bad to put into the rattlesnake, the scorpion and the skunk. So He put all these together, covered it with suspicion, wrapped it with jealousy, marked it with a yellow streak and called it a KNOCKER."

The man who wrote this, if his argument holds good, is a direct son of Old Man Knocker himself, for in an exhibition of knocking he strikes 12.

Here are the facts in the case: Every man in the world who has given his name deep in the granite of Time was a knocker. Every man whom the world calls "savior" knocked himself into immortality. Christ knocked against hypocrisy and pretense until they crucified Him, and thus lifted His message up until it became the great religion of civilization. The signers of the Declaration of Independence knocked against the tyranny of England, and George Washington knocked until the stuffing was knocked out of old King George. Abraham Lincoln knocked against slavery, along with John Brown, Henry Ward Beecher, Wendell Phillips and Garrison. Dickens knocked against the abuses of his country, and he did an effective job. Tolstoy was a knocker, as were Tom Paine, Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Israel Putnam. Roosevelt was as conspicuous a knocker as we have seen in recent times. Wilson knocked, and so do Lodge, Johnson, Watson, Borah and Reed.

Knocking is more of a virtue than a vice. There are more good knockers than bad knockers. If there is any finer work than knocking against hypocrisy, pretense, cant, slavery, hate, malice, cupidity, greed, envy, spite, jealousy, fear, superstition, I do not know what it can be. Our real friends are those who knock us by telling the real truth about ourselves. Every step upward that the world has taken has been the result of a reformer's knocks. Genius itself is the knock carried out with exceeding fineness and infinite pains. The knocker is one who tells the truth and puts the kibosh on prevalent abuses. So long as nobody knocked, there were what are known as the Dark Ages, and as soon as the knocking began, civilization started on its way up. Socrates, Copernicus, Galileo, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Pathagoras, Confucius, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, John the Baptist, John Knox, John Wesley, Martin Luther—knockers all and knockers glorious! The knocker of to-day is in good company. When knocking ceases, Progress will lag on leaden legs. Long live the knocker!

Too Drastic.

Gaunt and killed, the Scotsman was trying to beguile the inhabitants of the Yorkshire village to give of their charity. But either they were all deaf, or his pipes had lost their power. Anyway, he played in vain.

But suddenly out of one of the cottages appeared a man, who spoke in known accents.

"Ma auld mither is in a creetical condection," he explained to the piper, "an' the doctor wha's w' hur the noo says the bonny pipes will save her life."

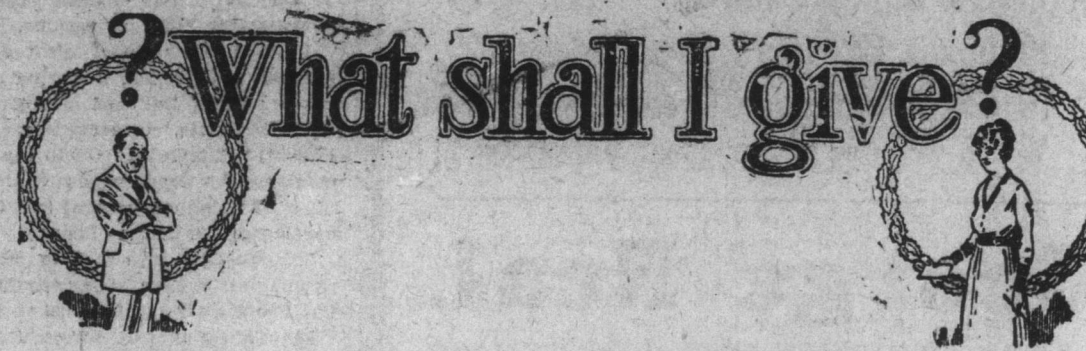
That was enough for the player. For two solid hours he marched back and forth, blowing his hardest.

Then the other strayer from Scotland appeared again.

"How's the auld ledly noo?" asked the piper.

"Daen' fine," replied the sufferer's son, "but, mon, ye've killed the puir doctor."

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St. John's.

Importance of Draining.

When preparing land for the reception of fruit trees, proper draining is one of the most important matters that has to be dealt with, for few plants or trees will thrive in water-logged soil. Where deep drains can

not, from any cause, be got, surface draining must be resorted to, each tree being planted on a mound of soil, with shallow ditches cut between the rows to carry off the surface water. This plan answers well for apple and plum trees, but pears require lighter and warmer root run. Beware of over-darling borders at the foot of sunny

Coughs and Colds are very prevalent at present. Try Phorotone at STAFFORD'S, Theatre Hill. act6,11