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ST. JOHN'S

LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, March 27th, 1920.

ESING OVERSEAS VISITORS.

are threatened with an enormous influx of visitors into London summer and accommodation all booked in the leading hotels and dining houses is being strained to the utmost. Something like 20,000 are expected from Canada and from the United States, besides numbers from the Continent of Europe and the British Colonies. I am to be able to report, however, attempts are now being made to deal with this problem. Sir Harry Smith, M.P., has been instrumental in securing the formation of a committee which will arrange the details of a central clearing for visitors. The headquarters will be in London, but it will deal with requirements all over the provinces. One plan is to circulate heads of households in London who have rooms at their disposal to take in paying guests abroad. This will help the holder here and certainly go a long way towards relieving the congestion. I understand that a large number of offers have already been made. One side issue of the problem is not to be neglected. It would increase the feeling of international good feeling, a thing of importance in these days when other people are endeavouring to quarrel against nations.

M.P.'S WANT MORE.

ough so many important questions are daily before the House of Commons I find that a great number of members are much more interested in personal questions of the appropriateness of an increase in Parlia-

mentary salaries. It is true that very frequently Members of Parliament have other income, but that fact is not usually allowed to be an argument against an increase of payment for service rendered. Taking the increase in the cost of living into account, \$2,000 a year before the war is not equal to half that sum nowadays, and, as a matter of fact, the \$2,000 a year is never paid net, but only after the deduction of income tax. Travelling by train and taxicab, two very important things for Members of Parliament, have increased tremendously in price and difficulty since payment of Members was first introduced by Mr. Asquith. Furthermore, there are plenty of Members of foreign legislatures who get higher salaries than British pays, whilst in very many cases travelling expenses are allowed. In the United States Members of the House of Representatives are paid on a much more lavish scale and stationery and other things are supplied to them. It cannot be said that talks in the Lobby here and at the clubs show any feeling of distinct grievance, but there is certainly an inclination to suggest at least another \$500 a year with, if possible, the whole resulting \$2,500 paid free of income tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, is not very responsive to suggestions of this sort. No Member, of course, could live on his salary if he had to, but as a rule even the Labor Members are in receipt of trade union salaries as well that enable them to get along therefore.

OPERA FOR THE PEOPLE.

One of the marvellous things of recent theatrical development in London has been the re-opening of the ancient home of transpontine melo-

drama, the Surrey Theatre, as an opera house. The Surrey is a quaint old building tucked right away in the South of London in the midst of what is largely a business and industrial population. The Fairbairn-Milne Opera Company is giving a prolonged season of operas here and is proving that these can appeal to the masses. Up to date ten operas, including "Don Giovanni" and the "Valkyrie" have been mounted in the eight weeks the season has been running, and three new English operas are down for production--Barkworth's "Romeo and Juliet" on April 7th, "Gatty's The Tempest" on April 14th and McAlpin's "Excalibur" on April 21st. Other native operas are being considered and each new work is to be given a sufficient repetition to enable it to secure a hold upon the music-loving public. In bygone centuries prior to the coming of German music this country had a fine name for music, and in the days of Purcell and later it led the world. The trouble with the Fairbairn-Milne Company is that although well supported by the public the amount of money that is being taken is not sufficient to cover expenses. An appeal for a further \$50,000 has been issued to enable the company to carry on for at least another twelve months, and already the Musicians' Company has given \$5,000 towards this.

A PARIS FASHION INVASION.

Last Saturday something quite new in the way of fashion exhibits was inaugurated in London. Ten French firms have co-operated and taken the Grafton Galleries for five days, where they are showing Parisienne dress and confections of the latest fashion, worn by trained French mannequins. The displays are taking place daily from half past two to half past four, and admission is by tickets at 2s. (\$5.25) and 10s. 6d. (\$2.62) each. Of the ten firms uniting in these displays only five have hitherto had a London branch, and the whole idea comes from the French Chamber of Commerce in London. Smart London West End dress-makers are rather concerned about the movement as they say they fear something like a trade war in the business. Already one enterprising French firm has opened a shop in the Strand, where French models of a most fascinating character are being shown in the shop window. One result will be a distinct brightening up of the dress displays hitherto seen in the Metropolis in the London shops. As a matter of fact, a number of the tickets sold for this French display have been bought by trade representatives.

THE WOMEN POLICE.

The women police who are now quite a feature of the London streets, especially in the central districts and the West End, have had a hard fight to secure recognition, but through

many disappointments and embarrassments they have acquired great knowledge in their special work. Inspector Fife, of the force, can tell a hundred remarkable stories of the work of these women. They have patrolled streets of houses of ill fame and prevented couples going to the houses to such an extent that they have "spoiled the trade." Girls as young as 15 years have been rescued in the Strand, Coventry Street and Piccadilly from men who have been deliberately making them drunk for a purpose that can easily be guessed at. They have also been instrumental in preventing the booking of rooms by women and men of evil character, and they have done a very large amount of most useful, although difficult preventative and rescue work. Their uniform is now becoming so familiar that it is a terror to evil doers. In Piccadilly one day last week two officers with girls actually ran away at full speed when the women police approached and spoke to their companions. Sometimes it is the men and sometimes the girls who are assisted. Hotels are all so helped to keep out undesirable of both sexes. London's West End and Central thoroughfares already show a distinctly improved appearance.

THE MOTOR FUEL WAR.

The steady rise in the price of petrol, a price which, according to the committee of investigation, is very largely unjustified, is directing the attention of all motor fuel users, whether for pleasure or commercial purposes, to a closer and closer search for spirits to compete with petrol. Benzol practically holds the field for the time being on this side and is rather cheaper than petrol, besides giving 12½ per cent. more power and 25 per cent. more mileage. Supplies of benzol, however, are limited, and there appears to be no conceivable prospect of those supplies being increased to any extent in the near future. In fact, the output has gone down recently and, of course, being extracted from coke and coal its production is determined by the time limit on the output of these minerals. Power alcohol derived from the vegetable kingdom is the great theoretical aid and competitor, but there still remain Governmental department restrictions that impede progress here. Potatoes are amongst the best known sources of power alcohol, but potatoes so far are ruled out as a source of commercial supply so far as this country is concerned. There is great room for production, however, in connection with crops in tropical and sub-tropical countries. Everyone agrees that alcohol has many advantages as a motor fuel, but so far if used unmixed with another spirit, it corrodes the engine through imperfect oxidation. It is also difficult to start an engine on unless reinforced. It is clear, however, that something more useful must be done than wrang-



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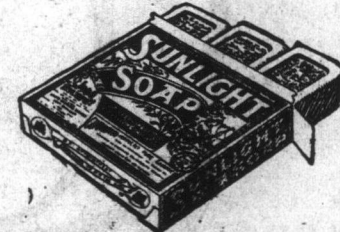
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A Remarkable Clock.

One of the most remarkable clocks is that in Strasbourg Cathedral. Every day at twelve o'clock an eager crowd assembles to see the curious evolutions of the clock, for at that hour a very elaborate performance is gone through.

The clock not only tells the time of day; it tells on its calendar the months, the day of the month, and all the movable feast days of the Catholic Church. A statue of Apollo points out the day of the month and the name of the saint corresponding to that day. We can learn from it the time for the rising and setting of the sun, while the diurnal motion of the moon round the earth, and its passages over the meridian, the phases of the moon, and the eclipses of the sun and moon are all indicated.

Allegorical figures seated in chariots, represent the days of the week, drive slowly into view, appearing each day in proper order. On Sunday, Apollo, drawn by the horses of the sun; on Monday, Diana, by a stag; on Tuesday, Mars; on Wednesday, Jupiter armed with a thunderbolt; on Friday, Venus; on Saturday, Saturn.

At a quarter past the hour the figure of a little child trips out on to one of the galleries of the clock and strikes a bell once; at half-past a spruce young man appears and strikes it twice; at a quarter to the hour a sober middle-aged man strikes it three times, and just before the hour a tottering old man comes slowly into view and strikes the bell four times; then a ghastly figure of death in the form of a skeleton solemnly strikes the bell.

When twelve o'clock strikes the twelve Apostles appear on the top gallery of the clock, each one bowing as he passes the figure of Christ, who stands with uplifted hands blessing each in turn. As the procession is slowly passing by, the solemn silence is broken by the loud crowing of a great cock that stands on the top of the clock to the left side. A convulsive flapping of its wings indicates to the onlooker that this famous bird is preparing to life up its

Hullo!



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RAWLINS' CROSS.

voice, which it does at length, crowing three times in a marvellously hoarse and life-like manner. The new waistline is high. One collar of accordion-pleated crepe-de-chine is of waist length.