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What It Costs an M. P. to Live at Ottawa.

A great deal has been said as to the cost of living in Ottawa, but on this point there has been a vast amount of exaggeration and misstatement. Ottawa is not a cheap place for householders, nor is it an extravagantly expensive place; and, whilst it is quite true that some things cost more there than in Montreal or Toronto, yet, compared with Western cities, the prices are in favor of the Federal capital.

Club life is expensive wherever you find it, but then very few, comparatively, of the members are clubmen, and those that are, only enjoy the privilege of using the Rideau Club because when at their homes they are members of some club that is affiliated with the Rideau. It is safe to say there are not five members, if there are any, who belong to the Rideau Club because they are members of Parliament. Of course, some of the Ministers have joined the club as residents in the city, but outside them almost all the members who use the club use it as members of some other similar institution. These men do not spend more money in the club than they would probably spend in the home club to which they belong, unless they on some off night get drawn into a quiet game of poker, and have an unusual and constant run of bad luck. Again, these men are mostly men of substance, who, having acquired the liking for club life, and being well able to afford it, do not require the additional sessional indemnity to assist them in their indulgence. It may be perfectly true that they could make more money during the session in attending to their own business than they can hope to receive as sessional indemnity, but that was a matter with which they ought to have reckoned before they accepted nomination, and of which they have no right to complain, nor have they any right or reason to expect the taxpayer to make good the amount of their loss. One thing is perfectly evident, and that is that in the expenses of maintaining club life, there can be found no argument that will justify the addition of \$1,000 yearly to the amount of the indemnity.

Only one member last session registered his address as the Rideau Club, but this does not represent the number who have the right of membership.

Seventy-two members registered as at hotels, where they would be charged from \$30 a month upwards. Most of the hotels give special rates to members, especially if they engage their rooms for the session, but the highest rate would be covered by \$100 a month. In a six months' session, therefore, these members would be paying from \$180 to \$600 for their board and lodging. It must be remembered, however, that all these members traveled on a pass, and they were allowed 10c. per mile for travelling expenses, a

sum which in the case of members coming from the Coast would mean a very considerable amount towards their board bill.

Ten members registered as at Chambers, where they would pay for their room and breakfast from \$17 to \$30 a month, according to the position and furnishing of their rooms. This means that for this accommodation they would pay from \$102 to \$180 in a six months' session. As regards lunch and dinner these meals are supplied at the House of Commons restaurant at moderate rates, but these meals can be obtained in the city for from 15c. upwards, and cases have been known of even Senators inviting friends to dine with them at the 15c. places.

One hundred and eleven members registered as living at private houses—that is either in rooms or as boarders. Rooms can be obtained at various prices, according to locality and furnishing, and at rentals varying from \$5 monthly to \$20. Those living in rooms in this way can either get their meals at the Commons restaurant for \$25 per month, or at the Senate restaurant for \$28 monthly, or they can take meals at any of the various boarding establishments in the city at such prices as shall suit their taste and purse. In some cases two or three members form a small mess, and having taken suitable rooms, provide for their own meals, and divide the cost. This way of living comes fairly cheap, and where the friends are like-minded, constitutes a very agreeable and satisfactory method of boarding.

Board and rooms can be secured at from \$18.50 monthly upwards, and even at the lowest figure good, sound, comfortable feeding is given. Thus, it will be seen that very many members live for about \$100 per session of six months.

Some few of those who live at private addresses, take furnished houses and live in them as they would at their own homes. In these cases the cost of the extra establishment is all that the session requires in the way of outlay, as the cost of living, in the majority of cases, is not more than it would be at the member's own place of abode.

It is, of course, urged that being away from home means more expense to the member, but, after all, the extra cost cannot be brought up to any large amount such as a thousand dollars. Amusements, may in some cases come very dear, but many of the members do not spend any vast amount in amusements. When the House is in actual session of an evening, and very often of an afternoon, too, the smoke room will be filled with members playing games at cards, but without any gambling, whilst games are also played in many of the private rooms. When ping-pong first came up, one of the rooms was supplied by its occupants with a set of ping-pong, and, afternoon and evening, the sound of the game and the merry voices of the players made music along that corridor.

As to the cost of clothes and wearing apparel, the amount each member spends on those articles depends entirely upon his own will and pleasure, but it may be remarked that, whilst these things cost a little more, perhaps, in Ottawa than they do in some cities, yet the cities of Montreal and Toronto are only a day off, and it costs the member who is anxious to save money nothing to travel to either of those places. As a matter of fact many members take advantage of their railway passes, and frequently visit these cities, and buy what they want there.

It is a lamentable fact that many members fall into expensive habits, or, rather, form very expensive connections. At the beginning of each session there is an influx into Ottawa of members of the demimonde from Buffalo, Syracuse, and other cities, and who take up their temporary abode in Ottawa, with a view to preying on the unwary member. Sometimes an acquaintance springs up that lasts all the session, and these women, who are well known to all the messengers and hangers-on about the House, frequent the lobbies, asking for their member friends, and behaving with the usual effrontery of the practiced harlot. Unfortunately, the number of these harpies is increasing yearly, and the scandal caused by their behavior is becoming such that ere long measures will have to be taken to correct it. No amount of indemnity will satisfy the rapacity of these birds of prey, but it is a miserable fact that large amounts of money are lavished on them by members every session.

Another supposed cause of expense is drink. Now, the drinking habit around the House is not what it was many years ago. Then there was an open bar in the restaurant, and in the front of it groups would be found enjoying a quiet glass and a friendly

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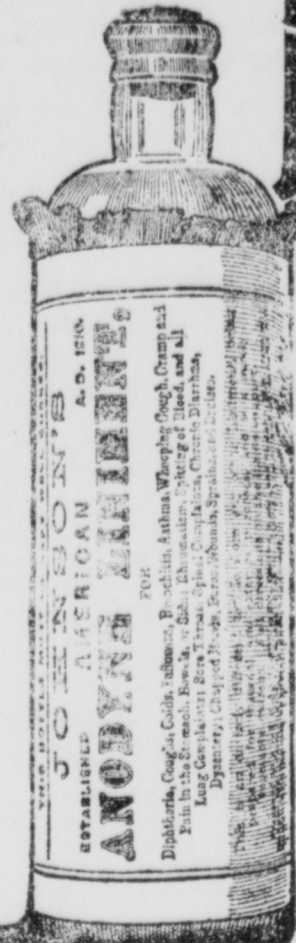
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chat. That has all been done away with, and, instead, buffets have been set up in the private rooms, and it is safe to say that there are to-day many glasses of liquor drunk to every one that was consumed in the olden days. Although the Commons bar is closed, there is still one open in the Senate, and that is largely patronized on certain occasions, though the liquor is all served in a large room adjoining the bar proper. Here songs and mirth often wile away a weary hour, waiting for a division, but the amount of money expended each session in both the Senate and Commons, for it is still purchasable in the Commons, is a very small portion of the value of the liquor consumed within the precincts each year. The bulk of the liquor consumed is consumed in the private rooms. Whilst in many cases members may feel constrained to entertain parties coming up from their constituencies, and invite them to take refreshments in their room in the House, in comparatively few cases does the cost come out of the member's pocket. In many cases, the liquor consumed in these rooms is contributed, and it is even said that if the brand of liquor does not suit the recipient, he does not hesitate to let the donor know. Probably the lobbyists of some of the great corporations could throw a light on this matter, which must be becoming a very heavy tax upon them.

There are other ways besides an increase in the indemnity in which a member can make his attendance on Parliament remunerative, but they do not come within the scope of this paper. Enough has been said to show any intelligent reader that in the cost of living at the capital there is no reasonable justification for any increase in the sessional indemnity.

Luxuries, frivolities, iniquities may run away with money, but if so, the money should be the members' private means, and not taken from the pockets of the taxpayers.—Ottawa Correspondent of Toronto Weekly Sun.

Reasoning From Experience.

A little East Side boy was having his first country outing, says the New York Tribune. He lay on the grass in a peach orchard, making a chain of daisies and buttercups. Across the blue sky a line of swallow dipped.

"Look up, look up, Jimmie. See the pretty birds flying through the air," said his hostess.

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