

MILLIONS ARE WASTED

INCIDENTAL EXPENSES OF CONGRESS ARE ENORMOUS

Yet a Congressional Committee Will Investigate Executive Departments to Find Out How Government Spends so Much Money

Congress is starting in to pass a fine-tooth comb through the executive departments, for the purpose of discovering and identifying any small parasites of graft which may be preying unsuspected upon the body politic. It is an expedient pregnant with possibilities, and has the special advantage of distracting attention from the real and important offenders, who are the senators and representatives themselves. For it is not going too far to say that the extravagance and stupidity of the legislators who sit under the dome of the dome of the capitol at Washington cost the people every year not less than fifty millions of dollars. This, indeed, is probably an under-estimate.

Millions of Books Rotting

In the basement of the capitol millions of books are literally rotting away—many of them really valuable documents, but unobtainable by anybody who wants them. Among them are hundreds of thousands of copies of the year book of the department of agriculture, which the department itself would be exceedingly glad to get, its own supply being insufficient to meet the demand.

The year book is the most widely-

sought publication issued by the government. Half a million copies of it are published annually, and of these the department gets only 6 per cent; the rest go to congress, for indiscriminate and more or less unintelligent distribution. They are deposited in the folding rooms of the house and senate, and many of the members never call for them, so that eventually they are relegated, in the original sacks, to permanent storage.

Before leaving the subject of publications it might be well to refer to the printed eulogies of senators and representatives who die while in office. Custom demands that their virtues shall be embalmed in book form, and the speeches delivered in their praise on the legislative floor are reproduced, in each instance, in a volume which costs from \$2,500 up. From ten to twenty-five thousand copies of this volume are distributed, fifty going to the family of the defunct statesman, and nearly all of the rest finding their way sooner or later to the junk shops. Each such book must have a portrait, which costs invariably \$34. Bound eulogies have run up as high as \$10,812, and the bill for them, which is paid by the people, averages about \$50,000 a year.

Army of Employees

The capitol is a large building, and its maintenance might reasonably be expected to cost a good deal of money; but, as a matter of fact, the extravagance of its management is on a scale nothing short of colossal. There are more than twelve hundred employees, of whom four hundred and fifty-one are on the pay roll of the senate alone—not counting seventy-two policemen, who look out for the safety of the structure and its contents for the relatively moderate stipend of \$37,500 a year. One is naturally puzzled to imagine why ninety gentlemen, incidentally to the performance of legislative business, should require four hundred and fifty-one persons to assist and wait upon them. The secret of it is, of course, that the people pay the wages.

The house of representatives, which has three hundred and eighty-six members, employs seven hundred and forty-three people, including a small army of private secretaries, each member being entitled to such an assistant, paid by the public at \$100 a month.

Lemonade and Perfumes

Representatives in congress are compelled to feel a direct responsibility to the constituents, and this serves to some extent as a restraint on extravagance. With the senate, however, it is otherwise, and attacks made upon the notorious abuses of the so-called contingent fund, for example, have been wholly devoid of effect. This fund is made to cover a multitude of utterly improper items—such as, just for one instance, Appolinaris lemonade, which in warm weather, when a session extends into the summer, is supplied in unlimited quantities and free of charge in the cloak-rooms of the upper house. A recent report to the secretary of the senate shows an expenditure of about \$630 for this purpose, representing the cost of forty cases of Appolinaris, thirty-five boxes of lemons, and one thousand two hundred pounds of sugar.

The senate consumes in every twelvemonth about thirty-four gallons of the finest cologne, most of which is purchased in bulk, allowing a quart and a pint for each member of the upper house. One ought surely to be able to distinguish a senator anywhere by his agreeable odor. Some of this cologne is used in the senate bathrooms, which are on a scale of magnificence that would not have been despised by the highlivers of ancient Rome. The tubs are carved out of single blocks of marble ten feet long, so that the legislator can lie submerged at length in them. Attendants skilled in massage are in waiting, and there are hot rooms, as



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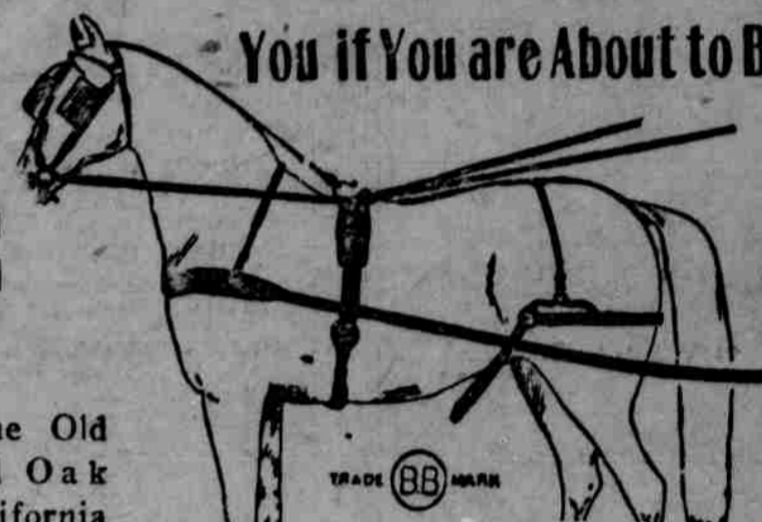
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