

written by Col. Wedgwood

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BIOGRAPHIES OF LIVING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Returned



In 1929 the Prime Minister (the Right Honourable Stanley Baldwin, M.P.) appointed a Committee, presided over by Colonel the Right Honourable Josiah Wedgwood, D.S.O., M.P., to examine the material available for a record of the personnel and politics of members of the House of Commons from A.D. 1264. The Committee reported that the task of preparing and publishing such a record was possible and should be undertaken.

It has been suggested that it would be desirable for living Members or ex-Members of Parliament to assist in the compilation of their own biographies. Below are questions which ought to be dealt with. It would be useful to have answers to these from our predecessors and contemporaries; they will inform and guide our contemporaries and successors in this and other lands.

No biographer, only the man himself, can answer such questions.

1. When did you first become interested in national politics? Why?
2. What influence started you on this line of thought?
3. What books formed your political views?
4. What were your religious convictions?
5. Which was then your favourite newspaper?
6. Why did you want to be an M.P.?
7. What or who first led you to think of it as a career?
8. What was your trade, profession or occupation?
9. Annual income, earned and un-earned, when first you stood for Parliament?
10. Had you experience of public work—if so, what?
11. How did you first get a seat?
12. What was your chief political interest?
13. On what did you, in fact, concentrate most in Parliament?
14. What did it cost you then to contest? And how much yearly while M.P.?
15. Who, at that time, was your ideal living British statesman, or dead statesman of any land?
16. How did Parliament modify your views?
17. How did being an M.P. affect your earning capacity?
18. What did you enjoy most in Parliamentary life?
19. What did you dislike most, apart from getting re-elected?
20. Which speech do you think was your best?
21. What was the greatest speech that you remember hearing?
22. Did speeches affect your vote?
23. What was your best piece of work?
24. If you are no longer in Parliament, why did you leave?

Answers to all these questions are optional. If it is desired that answers be treated as confidential, they should be enclosed in brackets; these will remain unpublished for 100 years.

Please supply also the usual bald facts from "Who's Who" or any other work of reference so as to save the compilers trouble.

Please write your answers overleaf.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT,
1, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE BUILDINGS,
DARTMOUTH STREET, S.W.1.

1. From earliest years. By nature.
2. The atmosphere of my home.
3. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire".
J. S. Mill's "Political Economy".
4. Deep and sincere. Church of Ireland (England)
5. I cannot remember.
6. To have greater and better opportunities to help others.
7. Residence in Russia, and the condition of life there.
8. The Army.
9. About £700 a year.
10. Service in India, Canada and South Africa (1899-1902),
including Siege of Ladysmith.
11. By defeating M^r Will Crooks at Woolwich in a straight
fight, upon my second attempt.
12. Efficiency of the Land Forces of the Crown.
13. On the Army.
14. £1500 each General Election, and £200 a year.
15. (1) Arthur James Balfour. (2) William Pitt and
Abraham Lincoln.
16. I was disillusioned as to the power of a Member to
effect much good, except in individual cases,
where he could render assistance.
17. I lost about £150 per annum.
18. To catch a political opponent tripping.
19. Proxy Debates.
20. My speech on the Army Estimates in June, 1910.
21. One made by the late Lord Salisbury (Prime Minister)
in the Albert Hall.
22. Little, if at all.
23. When I induced the Home Secretary to release a murderer
(late Sergeant, Royal Artillery), and I paid his passage
to his friends in Canada.
24. Because I was beaten at the following General Election
by a Government publication, which deprived me
of my profession and of all further activity — an

infringement of every Member's Constitutional
right to free speech in Parliament.

W. A. Adam
Major

19th July, 1936.