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K.C.B., J.P.

BIOGRAPHIES OF LIVING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT



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 If it is desired that answers be treated as confidential, they should be enclosed in brackets; these will remain unpublished for 100 years.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. In 1880 at the age of 14.
2. At the age of 14. I think I would be a Radical Father + Grandfather.
3. No particular books. I have been a daily reader of the "Manchester Guardian" for over 50 years. This splendid paper, and the late C.P. Scott, have greatly influenced my views.
4. Not particularly orthodox. I have always preferred a good ethical standard.
5. Was and is the "Manchester Guardian".
6. My work in connection with the Cotton Operatives convinced me that direct representation in Parliament would be helpful.
7. With me it was no so much a career, as an addition to my Trade Union work.
8. A Cotton Operative, later an official of my Trade Union.
9. £2.5.0 per week, all earned.
10. I was a J.P. at age 29, and a Town Councillor for 8 years.
11. I was returned unopposed as a Representative of the Cotton Operatives and the L.R.C. in 1902.

12. The interests of the Cotton Operatives and Labour movement generally.
13. All questions affecting labour. My principle was the Trades Disputes Act of 1906.
14. My election expenses were paid by the Textile Factory Workers Association.
15. In 1906. H. H. Asquith and David Lloyd George.
16. It made me think less of Party, and realize there were good men in all parties, but I still retained my labour sympathies.
17. There was no Payment of M.P.^s by the State in my day. The Textile Operatives made me an allowance, which did little more than meet the additional expense of being an M.P.
18. The freedom of debate and consequent study of every question from all sides.
19. I felt there was too much waste time. The Parliamentary business should employ more M.P.^s in Committee work.
20. When introducing the Trades Disputes Bill in 1903.
21. Mr. Lloyd George's Budget Speech of 1909.
22. Yes, especially those on Foreign affairs.

23. The successful carrying through of the Trades Dispute Bill in 1906. on behalf of the Labour Party.
24. I was offered a post in the Civil Service. which I accepted, with the approval of the Weavers Amalgamation, whose President I was at that time.

David James Shackleton.

Note. "Who's Who" contains a fair summary regarding myself, and positions held by me.
D.J.S.