

BUTTONS AND BOODLE.

"LINLEY'S LUCRATIVE LURK."

The Organising King's Apologia.

AN ATTEMPTED REPLY TO "TRUTH'S" CASTIGATION.

Sidelights on the Button Business.

The article in our issue of May 13 concerning the manner in which the business of the Commonwealth Button Fund had, until recently, been mismanaged, came as a sort of bombshell in some quarters. It was reprinted in the Sydney and Brisbane editions of "Truth," and proved particularly interesting in the Harbor City, where F. M. Linley, the late honorary organiser in Melbourne, and the person principally castigated in the article, is organising in connection with the "War Chest" scheme. When he got his breath back, Linley attempted

A REPLY TO "TRUTH'S" CRITICISM, as follows:—

(To the Editor of "Truth.")

Sir,—In connection with the statements made to "Truth" about myself published in your issue of May 13, I am at a loss to understand who inspired them, unless it be some person connected with the Button Funds, concerning which I had to enter strong objections about the methods in vogue when I was appointed Honorary Organiser, and possibly further because I also objected to any persons using the Button Funds as a means of self-advertisement and social climbing. Dealing with the specific charges made in your article:—

1. That I am alleged to have spent £50 in one month on taxis.

The facts are as follows:—

I never once ordered a taxi or motor car during the five months I was

ORGANISER OF THE BUTTON FUNDS.

On the last and busiest of the Button Days (Lady Hennessy's Day) Sir David Hennessy stopped his car and asked me to get in. I was walking at the time, and that was the only car I was in, and if £50 has been charged to the fund for taxis, it was by some other persons than myself. At any rate, there was no such amount charged in the

other persons than myself. At any rate, there was no such amount charged in the books up to the time I left Melbourne.

2. The statement that I drew an average of £6 per week for expenses.

The facts are these: I was 20 weeks in the office. On May 13 the "Age" published a balance-sheet of the Commonwealth Button Fund, duly audited by Messrs. Wootton, Fuller, and King, incorporated accountants, showing out of pocket expenses for myself, £54, for the whole period. Considering that I lived at Mornington, 40 miles out of Melbourne, and there are many

INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

connected with the running of such an organisation as the Commonwealth Button Fund, it will be seen that all expenses that I charged the fund, including train fares to my home, were a little over £2 10s. per week, and, as a matter of fact, as I told one of the executive when the question of expenses was raised, I only charged two-thirds of my expenses—the balance I paid myself.

You state that after Lady Hennessy's Day the trustees took charge of the office. That was at the end of March. In February I sent in my resignation as hon. organiser, but the executive would not accept it then, and I was pressed to stay and organise Lady Hennessy's Day, which I did.

The four Button Days I had charge of realised close on £39,000. The auditor's report stated that expenditure was only 1 per cent. of the total receipts, which Mr. A. B. Woolf, at the public meeting, was very careful to point out, and state that the fund was run in

A MOST ECONOMICAL WAY.

The balance-sheet was adopted with acclamation, on the motion of the Mayor of St. Kilda (Councillor Love), in which he also said the executive committee was to be commended on the small expenditure in connec-

said the executive committee was to be commended on the small expenditure in connection with the running of the fund.

The report of the trustees referred to by you in your statement, the executive committee declined to receive, but returned it to its authors, and as the executive were prominent men of Melbourne it would not appear that there was "an utter lack of administrative ability."

Various statements reflecting on my personal character, such as taking lady helpers to suppers, are absolutely untrue.

When in Sydney during the early part of April, I had an introduction to the Secretary of the Citizens' War Chest Fund, who were then contemplating

HOLDING A BUTTON DAY.

and I offered my services gratuitously, exactly as I did for the Button Funds of Melbourne, if they thought my services would be of any assistance to them. They were careful to make all inquiries, and themselves wrote to the Lord Mayor and others in Melbourne regarding my work and character, and I presume the replies were satisfactory, as I was immediately asked to proceed with the organising of "War Chest" Button Day.

It would appear that there is a class of people who cannot believe that any person would undertake onerous duties connected with patriotic work, for nothing, and you are quite at liberty to inquire from the Secretary of the "War Chest" Fund if any person connected with that fund, or Button Day, is paid a salary, because there is no official in receipt of

ANY PAYMENT WHATEVER.

other than one clerk at £3 per week, and he is not an official. My experience, and that of most others who have undertaken similar work, is that they can work 10 hours a day, be visited occasionally by some of the higher officials, who unblushingly take all the credit if the thing proves a success, and are quite prepared to allow the honorary man to take all the kicks if anything goes wrong and the movement falls at all flat.

I refer you to the Melbourne "Age" and "Argus" of May 16, regarding the Commonwealth Button Fund; also to Sir David Hennessy, of Melbourne, and Mr. W. H. Felstead, of Messrs. Beath, Schless, and Felstead, Melbourne, for any further information you may require regarding me.—Yours, etc.,

F. M. LINLEY.

114a Pitt-street, Sydney.

Now, "Truth" doesn't make assertions such as were contained in the article that hurt Mr. Linley's feelings without being absolutely sure of its facts. As for his first alleged baseless charge, we certainly did not accuse him of spending £50 in one month on taxis. What we did say was:—

"Lady Hennessy's Day" was Linley's

"Lady Hennessy's Day" was Linley's last great splash, the last time he had a chance of helping to run up bills for taxis (one account for taxis once ran into the neighborhood of £50.)

That extract from the article speaks for itself in refutation of his initial squeal.

Then as to

THE MATTER OF "EXPENSES."

Linley's sheet anchor is apparently the item in the balance-sheet presented to the executive committee of the Button Fund showing £54 as his out-of-pocket expenses. But anyone knows that a balance-sheet can mean either a lot or very little, and we have since applied to the manager of the Button Fund for a copy of that balance-sheet in order that we might learn how the "petty cash" item panned out. We have not yet received a copy of the balance-sheet, though other sections of the press were supplied with copies. Linley's share of the "petty cash" expenses, added to his other £54, would, we were informed, work out at very near £5 a week for 20 weeks. As for his reference to train fares to his home at Mornington, it is understood that when he took on the organising job he gave up his house at the seaside, and came to live in or near the city. But when he tries to ram it down our necks that he only charged up two-thirds of his expenses—well, we find it

RATHER HARD TO SWALLOW.

Our condemnation of his administration

was merely a repetition of the strictures contained in a report by Messrs. A. S. Woolcott and A. B. Woolf, the trustees of the fund. They, surely, are as prominent public men as any on the executive, and if they declared that there was "an utter lack of administration"—there, again, Linley misquotes our article—they must have had good ground for the assertion. As a matter of fact, their report gives many instances which quite bear out the statement.

However, Linley's apologetic attempt at self-justification is as unconvincing as the Kaiser's cackle over his naval "victory."

While on the matter of button days, it is interesting to note the following advertisement from the Sydney "Sunday Times":—

CELLULOID BUTTONS AND MEDALLIONS.

Patronise local industry. Buttons made by Australians for Australians. We made

by Australians for Australians. We made for the Commonwealth Button Fund, Melbourne. Having landed the latest Automatic Machinery, can undertake to supply any quantity. Prices, from £1 per 1,000. A. E. PATRICK, 94 Wilson-street, New town.

As this man's brother is supplying Melbourne button people at

ALMOST DOUBLE THAT PRICE, viz., £1 17s. 6d. per 1,000, it is surely up to someone to ask a few pertinent questions.

Then we have received from "E. Platt-Ruskin and Co's Australasian Publicity Bureau," Moore-street, Sydney, under date of the 7th inst., the following letter:—

Dear sir,—In your issue of May 13 I read an article on the Organising of "Button Days." There is a mention that through the activity of some Member the price of the Buttons was reduced from £3 5s. to £1 17s. 6d. per thousand. I wish to contradict same, as I can prove that the price of the Buttons was reduced through my constant advertising in the Melbourne Press at very low but still reasonable prices. As to the originality of the idea of the Button Movement, I herewith enclose a copy of a circular which I have posted to nearly every Town where a Post Office is established. I further wish to state that I have repeatedly offered to the Commonwealth Button Fund and also the Button Fund in Sydney to manufacture a superior Button Badge at a price of 25s. per thousand, but I am at a loss to understand why this offer was ignored.

The enclosed circular bears no date, and as it was apparently composed after several button days had been held in Sydney, the claim made on the strength of it is about as convincing as Linley's apologia.