

Too Hasty Decision

There is a strong and growing feeling among many Provincetown people, especially those who are in any kind of business that too little consideration was given to the resignation of the official Town Crier, his reasons for that action, and to the problem of finding an adequate successor.

That it will be a very real problem unless Arthur P. Snader can be persuaded to reconsider and at a stipend commensurate with his acknowledged abilities, will be borne out by those who were charged with the task of finding someone to take the post after the long tenure of one Amos Kubic, after several seasons of trying to explain to thousands of disappointed visitors why Provincetown no longer had a Town Crier.

It may look like an easy job, this being Town Crier, but it is far from such. Among the many requirements for it are an intelligent knowledge of the town, its past history and present set-up; a familiarity with the rest of Cape Cod, its highways and attractions; a good clear voice, good enunciation and ability to use the King's English; a pride in personal appearance to reflect the dignity of the ancient office and credit upon the town. The Town Crier must have infinite patience in handling those visitors who are not quite bright and others who are buffoons; with patience, too, to pause hundreds of times a day for those who want to take his picture. He must combine the skills of diplomat, scholar and local statesman on many occasions and possess an unflinching sense of humor. To top it all, he must be a versatile actor, for daily the Town Crier must re-enact the offices of an old profession.

A committee looked long, following the retirement of Amos Kubic, to find a man who would meet the exacting requirements of the post. The wrong person could so easily turn the whole situation into a burlesque. Realizing that a man skilled on the stage might be a likely choice, Frank Andrews, a fine, venerable character actor, accepted the position for one Summer. He could take no more, and Charles Walton, another actor replaced him, doing an excellent job for several seasons but finally deciding there were more pleasant and profitable ways of spending a Summer.

In Mr. Snader, Provincetown, many feel, found its happiest choice and it is generally agreed that he, more than any in the past, has served both the town and its visitors, in a highly satisfactory manner.

A few of our native residents feel that a Town Crier is superfluous or that, if we have one, he should not make his rounds in costume. That feeling is certainly not shared by our visitors. That fact was brought home to us most emphatically during the seasons when the post could not be filled.

Our Town Crier is one of our most important Summer institutions. A Cape End business man yesterday rated it ahead of the Pilgrim Memorial Monument as an attraction bringing visitors to town. Certainly we are envied by many another New England resort community.

The Provincetown Town Crier is not a character dreamed up as a publicity stunt, though if it had been, it would have been a stroke of genius. He is part and parcel of the early traditions of the town. In the Historical Museum a considerable part of a large case is devoted to the pictures of former and famous Criers and their bells. Included are George Washington Ready who saw the sea serpent, Walter "Hoppy-Tee" Smith, Barney Turner, Amos Kubic, Frank Andrews,

Charles Walton. Arthur P. Snader has yet to be added to this collection. It all proves that our Town Crier is certainly a thoroughly authentic and legitimate Cape End institution.

Already from a reader of The Advocate, Eleanor Hungaro of Aurora, Ill., has come this note, "I have vacationed in delightful Provincetown for the past three Summers. It was always fun to go to the Post Office for our mail when it was time for the Town Crier to come along ringing his bell and calling the public notices. Now I read in The Advocate that Mr. Snader is resigning. It makes me sad to think we will not see him any more as he gave Provincetown so much atmosphere."

Unquestionably the same feeling is shared in by thousands of those who visit Provincetown annually.

Some years ago what was then the Board of Trade had a branch called the Town Criers whose task it was to raise funds for Summer promotional activities and to supervise them. Donations were made by business people and the money was used to pay the Town Crier, publish a very popular map of the Cape Tip and town, and other incidentals. William F. Gilman had the task of supervising the Town Crier and his linen—a job which he swore annually he would never tackle again.

But the point is this—the business interests of the town should have been canvassed to determine their opinion as to the value of the Town Crier, how far they might feel the Town should go in defraying the expenses and how far they, themselves would go in paying an adequate salary for the services rendered by this unique and highly specialized institution.

Certainly treble the salary which has been paid would not be too much.

April 4, 1957

Wanted: Able Town Crier For \$600

About the only regrettable action taken by Provincetown citizens at their recent Town Meeting was the refusal to pay a fair wage to the person who has performed the duties of Town Crier so skillfully and intelligently during recent years.

In the debate over the issue comparisons were made with the salaries paid teachers, road workers and milkmen. If such rules of compensation could be enforced, then the school principal, charged with seeing that our youngsters get a good education should be on par with a prize fighter, a garage mechanic with an automobile racer and a newspaper man with Elvis Presley.

Ed Sullivan is emcee on a certain television program. He can't sing and dance like Perry Como, for instance, or tell a story and sing like Ernie Ford. His bulbous eyes almost pop out as he surveys the audience but he is far away from the magic of Eddie Cantor. True, he seems greatly concerned with the knot of his tie, but there isn't a laugh in that.

Many people like Ed even though he can't sing, tell a joke or dance or reveal a single indication of showmanship. And that is their privilege.

But it has been stated on the best of authority that he is paid \$8,000; not for a year, a month or a week. That is his meagre stipend for every appearance.

And somebody who can pay that salary must think he is worth it.

That is the way the salary for the official Provincetown Town Crier should be regarded. What is a thoroughly accomplished Town Crier worth to us? If the situation were broken down

by one trained in the valuation of various forms of publicity it might be found that he is worth \$2,400 rather than the \$1,200 asked.

Now the Selectmen must find an adequate Town Crier who will do the job again for \$600 for the season. Chances are, if one can be found and that is highly doubtful, he will have to build up his knowledge of the town during his first year, after which he will undoubtedly quit.

During the coming season, more than ever before, we will need a thoroughly and equally able ambassador on the street

- 1957 -

LEATHER LUNGS, KNOWING HISTORY WORTH ONLY \$600 IN PROVINCETOWN

PROVINCETOWN, April 6 (AP)—Wanted: a man with leather lungs and a first-class knowledge of local history for one of the most exclusive professions in the country. Salary: \$600.

The town of Provincetown, on the tip of Cape Cod, is advertising for a town crier. The job is billed as the only one of its kind in the nation.

For years Arthur Snader was a familiar figure as he roamed the streets dressed in his Pilgrim tunic, stovepipe hat and brass-buckled shoes, ringing his bell and calling out the news during the summer season.

But Snader quit last September saying the pay was too low. Last month a town meeting rejected a proposed hike in the \$600 salary.

The town will accept applications through April 21. The requirements are that he know local history, can "call" news and has a physique that "shoes off" a Pilgrim costume to good advantage.

Customarily the town—population 3,795—supplies the trousers and tunic for the costume, but the applicant should be prepared to supply his own hat, belt and buckled shoes.

- April 11, 1957

AND NOW THE famished metropolitan press will have a bone to gnaw on until a better one comes around. The Miami Herald runs the two-column head, "Town Crier Job Open; Pay \$600," with a Provincetown, Rhode Island dateline, and the story, "Wanted: A man with leather lungs and a first-class knowledge of local history for one of the most exclusive professions in the country. Salary; \$600. The town of Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod, is advertising for a town crier. The job is billed as the only one of its kind in the nation . . . For years Arthur Snader was a familiar figure as he roamed the streets dressed in his Pilgrim tunic, stove-pipe hat and brass buckled shoes, ringing his bell and calling out the news during the Summer season. Last month a town meeting rejected a proposed hike in the \$600 salary. The town will accept applications through April 21. The requirements are that he know local history, can "call" news, and has a physique that "shows off" a Pilgrim costume to good advantage. Customarily the town, population 3,795 — supplies the trousers and tunic for the costume, but the applicant should be prepared to supply his own hat, belt and buckled shoes." This AP dispatch neglects to make any mention of the bell, so for the hordes, eager to apply for the \$600 job it might be well to add that this, too, is supplied by the town.