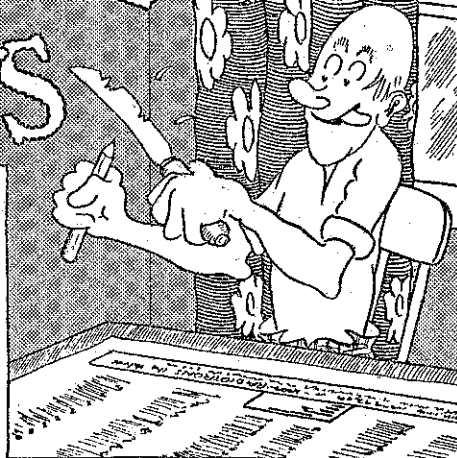


ARCHIBALD on ELECTIONS

By
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Illustrated by
the Author



NOW that the elections and rejections is over and the lucky candidates is feedin' themselves on the sweets of office, yer might be interested to 'ear what I knows of this votin' business. Like ordinary folks, I goes to 'ear the different spokesmen speakin', but the more I 'ears, the more me 'ead buzzes and the metaphores gets mixed, and when I gets the election propergander through the mail with its quack-quackin' I gets all o' and bogged in the mists of the mind!

*Me poor old pate just 'eaves with economics,
The circulars fair makes me 'ead go round,
I finds relief to read our 'Erbert's comics,
And gets me feet once more upon the ground!
Me noodle numbs until I feels a noodle,
Me upper-story seems it's jerry-built,
I thinks there must be boodle in flapdoodle
When so much dribblin' drivellin' is spilt!
Me chamium feels it's cracked, conked out, and crazy,
The candidates just whisks me wits in fits,
They twiddles words until the twaddle's 'asy,
And finally me blinkin' gumption quits!*

I gets outside the "Dominion" office early after 'angin' to a Miramar tram by me eyebrows, as there's always room for one more on a Wellington tram. I gets into a good position right in the middle of the board, where I decides to stop. Be blowed if I don't drop a penny on the ground, what runs among the folks' feet. It made me mad, because I couldn't see it and I wanted to go 'ome about ten o'clock and not 'ang round till the crowd broke up after midnight!

Then I starts tellin' a man next door to me about a election I voted at in the country when I 'ad to go on 'orseback, and the 'orse wouldn't stop at the pollin' booth but went straight on about ten mile, so I 'ad to fall off and run back, but the doors was shut!

Then the first result come through. A door opened in the bill-board what 'ad the candidates' names on and me 'eart sank into me socks as I could see a man, and I thought 'e might step right out and lose interest in the election. Then the board turns round again, and a man what 'ad been breathin' beer in me face and 'iccups in me ear, nearly busted me ear-drum with a cheer! I protested! That started the crowd cheerin' in 'undreds.

SOME what was against me started 'ootin' like New Year's Eve. They was 'ootin' and shoutin' for the rest of the night! I did me best to stop it, but it was no good. Then I spots the name of the man what I votes for—at least I thinks I votes for 'im, 'cause I always gets excited in a pollin' booth and me brains gets shuffled up into a soup.

*Aghast and flabbergasted, sir, I don't know north from south
I nearly chews me tonsils as me 'eart jumps in me mouth!*

*I stands and sucks me pencil, while I tries to see what's what,
I don't know if I makes a cross, or strokes out all the lot!
I trembles like a gaspin' leaf, me brains spins up the spout,
Me teeth makes such a chatterin' noise, I 'as to take them out!
Me needle-witted mental poise turns noise and runs amuck,
I feels I'm goin' off me dot—and simply trusts to luck!*

The crowd keeps shovin' me away from where me penny was. I does me best to stand still, but there was 'undreds 'gainst me. Of course, there was 'undreds on my side, too, but as I was in the blinkin' middle, I gets squeezed. 'Owever, as there's two pretty girls squeezin' me, I don't mind, it bein' worth a penny! Then I looks at the board

again and I sees somebody 'as altered the figures for the man I votes for. I was annoyed about it, because it's not right to 'ave muddlin' men what can't add right pastin' numbers, and 'as to keep alterin' them. I knows now what 'appens to the duffers at school—they joins newspapers! Per'aps that's why I ain't won a art union yet, printin' wrong numbers in the paper!

A man keeps talkin' out of a loudspeaker. 'E

must 'ave been a little man because I couldn't see 'im be'ind the trumpet. 'E don't give me a chance to follow all 'e said because by the time I found out where 'Invercargill is, 'e 'ad dodged to another part—playin' 'ide and seek. I nearly won once when 'e said "Wai-marino" because I found it right away—at least I found "Waitomo," which should count 'alf a point!

I nearly dislocates me neck, gets bumped until I feels a wreck.

The blinkin' town is all on deck—they shoves me to and fro!

*Excited youths takes furtive nips, old fossils shouts sarcastic quips
There's smell of scent and fish and chips—while strangers calls me "Beau!"*

After somebody pokes me in the eye, and somebody loiters on me corns, and I picks up some fleas on the point of starvation, I decides to go to the "Radio Record" office and complain about losin' me penny and about the man pastin' wrong numbers. I tries to worm me way out by the sweat of me brow, ju jitsu and the short scissors.

THE man next to me says, "Stop fidgettin'!" I says I want to get out! 'E says I should 'ave thought of that before I got in the crowd! I asks 'im to 'old 'is breath and stand sideways to give me a chance. For 'alf a 'our I ebbs and flows from pillar to post, 'ustled and bustled, before gettin' cast up on the pavement after bein' swore at in half a dozen languages includin' Esperanto.

I goes straight to the office. No wonder the pastin' man don't know what 'e's doin' because I never seen such a stir in all me life. Men was hurryin' this way and that way, nobody knowin' where they were goin'. A man says I can't get in unless I'm a official. I says I knows a man what's a official in the Post Office. I explains that, I've complaints to make and 'e says "Write to the papers!" I says I've suggestions to make for the improvement of the broadcastin' and 'e says that next elections I can take charge, but not to make a exposure and a scene! I tells 'im 'ow radio in the country 'omes is wonderful, for I remembers a few years ago in the country I starts to ride to a friend's 'ouse one 'ot election night to 'ear the results on the phone, and gets bumped off me steed, settin' the fashion for the Prince of Wales, and I 'as to walk 'ome under a old umbrella what I found because it rained, but 'e wasn't listenin' and 'ad shut the door.

I gets 'ome at last, spreads the "Radio Record" election chart on the table, sharpens me pencil like a real editor, and writes down the results what oozes out of me loudspeaker. Some of the results don't come too fast. That's because some of the candidates is too old to count their votes quick, and 'as to do it over again 'cause they forgets what number comes after 58! They get annoyed when the opposition candidate says: "'Ere's another 'undred for me, old fungus-face!" They stops countin' to 'ave a row! When they cools down they gets the wrong number when they phones the broadcastin' studio. By the time they gets the right number, they 'ave forgot the first number they thought of, and 'as to count (Concluded on page 29.)