

# GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

## GRAND LODGE OF ALBERTA A.F. & A.M.

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### "INNOVATION IN THE BODY OF MASONRY"

Once the writer had the temerity to suggest that Freemasonry, as a social institution, was in competition for the favor of young manhood with hundreds of altruistic organizations which have sprung up about it during the last quarter of a century. In spite of the anathema with which the suggestion was received the writer has had no occasion to change his view, and recent reports of Grand Lodges, particularly in North America, seem to support him.

Three things suggest themselves for serious consideration. First, the huge loss of membership; second, the small number of initiates, and, third, the sharply rising age levels of those who do apply.

Undoubtedly economic conditions in the last five years have had much to do with all three. All Lodges and Grand Lodges have suffered severely for lack of money and it is to their everlasting credit that they have succeeded in weathering the storm so well, particularly in the duty of helping those who have borne the full fury of the tempests of depression.

But the writer ventures another side of the picture and asks the question; "Are we doing all we can to hold our ground and attract new members?" His opinion is that we are not. In his view Freemasonry is, if anything, an organization of builders, and, though the structure be mental and spiritual rather than physical, it cannot be raised without materials. The constant drain on effectives with accompanying lack of recruits will speedily dissolve any army and the army of Craftsmen is no exception.

During the depression years every merchant who has survived did one or both of two things. He lowered his price or made his merchandise more attractive to his customers. No suggestion is made that Freemasonry should be cheapened nor that any trumpet and banners campaign should be launched to rush in entirely unsuitable material. But it is suggested that, among city Lodges especially, a canvass of those members who have dropped out, who fail to attend Lodges, who show marked signs of indifference, might be a most illuminating experiment.

It is not enough to fold our hands and wait for the storm to pass. No better chance will ever come to put our house in order. Freemasonry has everything to build upon, has built a magnificent tradition of intelligence and benevolence but it falters in the march. Men are leaving the ranks, others wax exceeding weary with the weight of worn out forms, new men are needed. Where and how? Look about you! What attracts young men, middle-aged men, old men? What can they buy elsewhere in mental and spiritual refreshment for the equivalent of our initiation fees and annual dues?

In our answer to that lies the future of Freemasonry as a social institution with weight and force in the community. Stiffnecked and unbending adherence to the last jot and tittle of a system, no matter how well it served a hundred, fifty or even twenty-five years ago, seems a sure way to annihilation in the march of progress.

A.M.M.

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#### WHY AM I A MASON?

(A third answer)

One duty of a man may be defined as the obligation to make himself economically efficient. To use an expression common in the Mother Country we should learn "to pull our own weight in the boat." I AM A MASON because MASONRY teaches among other things that we should practice the moral and social virtues of which self-reliance and self-help are surely most important ones. No man can be a worthy Mason unless he recognizes his responsibility to contribute his share to the economic well-being of himself, his family and the community.

A.E.O.

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#### MASONRY'S STANDING

To judge Masonry's "Standing" by the social position it holds in the community would be equally as bad as doing so from its financial position, for that Masonry knows no class and is not "class conscious." Men of all classes may join in the practice of Masonic virtues, provided they believe in one Supreme Being and live clean, moral lives and can afford to meet the financial responsibilities the Craft lays upon them without detriment to those depending upon them.

The real test of the "standing" of the Craft lies in the character and conduct of its members, the example they set in the community, the manner in which they discharge their duties to their neighbors, the support they give to movements for the uplift of their fellow-men; in a word, their influence for good.

Masonry, like other institutions, gathers "blacksheep" into the fold, and, unfortunately, it is by these that men are prone to judge it. Care should be taken therefore to admit a minimum of those who would bring discredit to it. For the presence of this minimum the onus is primarily laid on the nominators to satisfy themselves that the credentials of a candidate for whom they are making themselves responsible are in compliance with the requirements of the Craft and who will in consequence maintain the "standing" of the Craft.

The London Freemason.

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#### THIS MASONIC BULLETIN

Since Christmas the editor of the Bulletin has received several letters from brethren who have thought it worth their while to comment on the contents of the Grand Lodge Bulletin. One of these, V.W. Bro. Arthur G. Bond of Hanna has taken the trouble to write at some length and part of his letter, for the ideas it contains, is quoted below:

"Quoting an active and authoritative exponent of Masonic Research and Education, 'Masonry to the large majority of the Craft is still a mystery. It becomes the delightful opportunity of the enlightened few to remove the vail and inform the brethren'.

"It would appear, however, from inquiry, that a very small percentage of the Alberta membership of the Craft know of, or peruse, this important Masonic medium (The Bulletin) despite the fact that Grand Lodge gratuitously supplies three copies of each issue to all constituent Lodges of the Grand Jurisdiction. In most instances, the use of the Bulletin appears to be limited to the Master and one or two Past Masters of a Lodge. As the general membership of the Craft do not peruse the Bulletin, the very ground upon which seeds of Masonic truth and light should be sown is left barren.

"It should be a most befitting Masonic gesture, if a live active brother (such as a P.M.) in each constituent lodge would voluntarily act as Bulletin Distributor, pass around the Lodge copies, and see that they get into the hands of at least all local resident members and local resident non-affiliated casual attendants.

"If there ever was a period in the long life of Freemasonry when there should be presentation of Masonic Truth relative to all phases of Speculative Freemasonry as a universal fraternal entity, it is the present time.

"We in this day and age are in the midst of a multiplicity of specifically organized bodies active in measures of particular modern interests. There are thousands of our Masonic membership, who, finding interesting planned studies and enjoyable activities in these modern organizations, transfer their interests, and to use the vernacular, "pass-up" the Masonic assemblies of those of our Lodges which lack helpful instruction in vital things Masonic, and are devoid of interesting Lodge work and applicable allied activities of an enjoyable nature."

#### WHY I AM INTERESTED IN FREEMASONRY

(Atlantic Lodge No. 2 of Norfolk, Virginia, recently conducted an educational campaign among its members and among other items offered a prize for the best answer to the above question. The winner was W. Bro. T. Penn Coleman and his answer to the above question appears below)

After discarding scores of excellent reasons in an effort to save words, and at the same time to arrive at the most important ones, I find these five remaining:

- (1) Because of its antiquity and history.
- (2) It is founded on the Word of God.
- (3) My faith in its promises of immortality.
- (4) It furnishes us with frequent opportunities to mingle in a spirit of true democracy and equality.
- (5) It teaches a beautiful and logical philosophy of life.

Volumes have been written of each of these five points, and all of them are worthy of serious reflection. However, I shall emulate the author of the second degree lecture by passing over most of them and elaborating on the last two, which bears directly on our associations with each other.

How many times I have come to this Temple tired in body and spirit, worn by the day's toil, discouraged by the failure of carefully laid plans, disheartened by misunderstandings, and gone away a couple of hours later - relaxed, refreshed and greatly encouraged. Why? Because when I enter that door I forget such relations as customer and clerk, employer and employee, debtor and creditor, profit and loss. Here we can forget the strain of businesses and professions. Forget the differences in financial and social standings. Here we are

all alike. Our interests are common interests because we have all had the same experiences and assume the same obligations. We, therefore, meet here on common ground, man to man, brother to brother.

We have heard such expressions "Life begins at forty". I have also heard men say that we do not know the meaning of life until we have passed the age of forty.

I am old enough to pass judgment on both of these sayings, and while no doubt they possess a certain amount of truth, I cannot wholly agree with them.

I think life begins when we are able to see ourselves in relation to other people, when we can apply the golden rule to our daily living, when we can put aside personal feeling and try to lighten the burdens of our fellow men, when we can forget our own troubles and make an earnest effort to bring a smile to the lips of a discouraged victim of illness, hard luck or depression. For it is only through these experiences that we can find true happiness. Only by administering to others can we learn enough of their misfortunes to enable us to contrast them with our own blessings and we cannot really live without an appreciation of our blessings. Therefore, life begins when we are able to see ourselves in relation to other people.

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#### DIMITS

From numerous inquiries that have been made to the Grand Lodge office, it would appear that some further explanation should be given as to the operation of Clause No. 219 of the new Constitution, regarding dimits.

All Lodges should note that three forms of dimit are authorized by this clause:

1. The clear dimit, as used heretofore.
2. A certificate discharging a brother from membership in his lodge, although dues may remain unpaid, the amount of such unpaid dues being stated on the face of the document.
3. A certificate discharging a brother from membership whose dues have been remitted by the lodge, the amount of which is stated on the face of the certificate.

A reference to the clause will explain the reason for such new forms of dimit, which should be obtained from the Grand Lodge office when required.

#### HOSPITAL VISITING

It has been found that many Masonic brethren or their dependents are patients from time to time in the Calgary hospitals. These hospitals are visited regularly by the Sick Visiting Committees of the Calgary lodges, and lodges concerned should report their cases to the Grand Lodge office in Calgary, so that the Visiting Committees can be notified immediately. It is found that occasionally patients are overlooked owing to lack of notification, although the Visiting Committees make inquiry at the hospitals when they visit.

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