



# GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

Editor: A. M. Mitchell, P.G.M.

## THIS BE THE TASK

**M**OST great social upheavals are marked by tremendous mass emotion surging up to a point where unless curbed by the thought and voice of the calm minority it may lead to long term consequences of unfortunate effect.

War is a major social upheaval and the present conflict may well bring consequences, the effect of which no man can forecast. As upon every section of the body politic, the struggle will have its effect on the Institution of Freemasonry for good or ill, and the Mason is well advised who endeavors to anticipate these consequences when that may be attempted in the light of reason and experience.

Some of the immediate consequences are obvious and already apparent. Masons have answered the call to the colors, leaving temporary gaps in our ranks unlikely to be filled, for those who might aspire under normal conditions have likewise answered the call.

No Mason would suggest that Brethren unable to associate in Lodges by reason of fighting in a cause common to those on active service and out of it, should be required to pay dues. Here, for the Lodge, comes the economic pinch, aggravated by the insistent demands from other sources, upon those who stay behind. The effect on the Lodge is and must be summed up in the simple business of retrenchment, "for the duration" at least. To "carry" brethren on active service is a simple act of fraternal regard and seems imperative in the conduct of affairs in any Lodge.

But mass emotion has done more in the past and may do so again. At least one Lodge made its active service members "life members," a highly generous act, no doubt, but one which has had unfortunate effect on the economic status of the Lodge since 1918 and especially through the long lean years of the depression.

Reason rather than emotion must weigh the case, and if "Charity knows no bounds save those of prudence," surely prudence will consider the long term effect of Lodge action in the great emergency.

There are less apparent things, however, to which Lodges with profit may turn their attention in times like these. A Masons' Lodge should be of all things a place of peace. *Ipsa facto*, then, the tone of meetings should be such that the very act of association

shall provide release of tension to every Brother who sits in Lodge assembled. The ceremonies with dignity, the quiet address, good music, a lack of jangling over office, routine detail, or unimportant quibbles, the entire absence of that type of cheap patriotism which insists on flag waving and sabre jangling in season and out—these things can make the atmosphere of any lodge a balm to the tired in spirit, a buckler against the fearful strain which must and will increase should the conflict continue for any length of time.

Every Mason as a citizen will be called upon for sacrifice. Every Mason because he is a citizen must bow to the common clamor. He is the victim of propaganda, of rumor, of appeal, of economic strain, even of exploitation. Against these things his nerves are strained to breaking point, and were it not for the havens of his home, his Church and his Lodge, might well give way.

So it seems the task of Freemasonry today is threefold; first, to resist the confusion incident to action of any kind based upon emotion; second, to endeavor by every means in its power to maintain the Lodge as a refuge and a place of peace; and third, to estimate the coming day when the swords shall be beaten into trowels for the builders, and quiet shall come again.

*Pax Vobiscum!*

A.M.M.

Consistency in regard to opinions is the slow poison of the intellectual life, the destroyer of its vividness and its energy.

—*Sir Humphrey Davy.*

All wish to know, but few the price will pay.  
—*Jwenal.*

### MARK GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND TO HAVE NEW HALL

According to *The Freemason*, London, for August 26th, Mark Masons' Hall in Great Queen Street is being razed for the purpose of erecting a new structure on the old site. Pending the rebuilding of the new premises the Grand Secretary's offices will be at International Buildings, 71 Kingsway, W. C., only a short distance from the site of the old hall.

## GRAND MASTER'S LETTER

My Dear Brethren:

Since the last issue of the *Bulletin*, accompanied by the Grand Secretary I have attended District Meetings at Loughheed, Holden, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Coleman, Irricana, Carbon, Delia, Lacombe, Stettler and Okotoks. With the exception of the first three and the last, we encountered very bad weather, either rain or snow, which affected the attendance to a considerable extent. Nevertheless, all things considered, the meetings were well attended and without exception were interesting, lively and displayed a keen interest on the part of the brethren present.

From the reports submitted it would appear that the finances of the Lodges are in excellent shape, that a fair number of candidates are seeking admission and that the *Bulletin* is steadily increasing in favor, although some Lodges have yet to learn the value of this publication to their membership. To them I would suggest that they look into this matter more closely.

Lodge attendance appears to be about the same, roughly 25 per cent. I do not think, however, that it should be inferred that non-attendance means lost interest. On the contrary, I think it is due in many cases to the distance members have to travel to attend Lodge, for the average member is quite proud of his membership, even though his attendance is somewhat infrequent.

Research and Education does not receive the prominence in Lodge affairs which it justly deserves, due apparently to lack of leadership combined with lack of knowledge as to where to start. There must be at least one in each Lodge who could develop this side of Masonic life. Again, may I suggest that they start with the *Bulletin*, and if they wish to have further advanced matter, either lectures or books, they should get in touch with M. W. Bro. A. M. Mitchell, the Chairman of the Grand Lodge Committee on Research and Education, who will be only too willing to advise and direct them along the lines best suited to the requirements of their particular Lodge.

I would also recommend more visiting in some cases. A Lodge which does not visit other Lodges has a tendency to become insular in its outlook and sometimes loses sight of the more desirable Masonic ideals and activities.

At one District Meeting a debate of considerable interest to those present was part of the program, the subjects being:

"Interest and Attendance in Lodges," by Past Masters.

"What I am doing to promote interest and attendance," by Masters.

"What I shall try to do to promote interest and attendance when I become Master," by Wardens.

This debate resulted in a lot of plain speaking, was full of much human interest and produced a number of new ideas from the younger members. I suggest that any one of these items would furnish a Lodge with an interesting evening's discussion and could well be used where there is at the moment no degree work.

In general the District Meetings have been most interesting, harmonious in their conduct and afforded an opportunity for happy fraternal associations of members, which these assemblies alone provide for those who meet each other at more or less infrequent intervals. The Question Box has been made ample use of and again showed a questioning mind on the part of many members. In this connection, not being walking encyclopaedias of Masonic knowledge, we were sometimes stumped to provide an immediate answer for some of the questions, which would entail research into jurisprudence, history, tradition and philosophy to give a really adequate answer.

Why not establish a Question Box period in the Lodge? And if questions could not be answered at once by some qualified brother, have them looked up and answered at the next meeting of the Lodge. I feel that this might be an excellent way to stimulate interest, particularly on the part of the younger member.

We have found Lodges who through following wrong advice were guilty of serious infractions of the Constitution. It was not that they willfully violated the provisions laid down for their guidance, but rather that the Masters acted in ignorance. May I suggest that all adopt as their guiding principle: "**When in doubt, write or phone the Grand Secretary.**" They will thus receive the benefit of sound advice and experience, possibly saving the Lodge trouble and Grand Lodge considerable expense.

The brethren are deeply concerned with matters of national import, particularly those which are likely to affect their Lodge in view of wartime conditions. In this connection I would once again counsel all the brethren to proceed quietly, not to be carried away by a wave of emotional patriotism, but to do things decently and in order, to see that the affairs of the Lodge are conducted in a conservative manner, against whatever may be the difficulties to face in the future.

To the brethren whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the District Meetings already held, I would convey the sincere good wishes of the Grand Secretary and myself, and to those yet to come to assure the brethren that we are looking forward with intense interest to renewing our acquaintance with them and to meeting them in the friendly and fraternal intercourse of their District Meeting.

With every good wish for the success of our Lodges, I am,

Fraternally and sincerely yours,  
 GEORGE MOORE,  
 Grand Master.

## THE ANTIQUITY OF FREEMASONRY

By A. E. OTTEWELL, P.G.R.

**T**HIS is the first of what is planned to be a series of short articles dealing with the story of Freemasonry throughout the world.

The first topic under the general heading will be the Antiquity of Freemasonry. The following excerpt from the "Charge" to initiates is familiar to all. Freemasonry is declared to be an "ancient and honorable institution; ancient no doubt it is, as

having existed from time immemorial; and honorable it must be acknowledged to be, as by a natural tendency it conduces to make those so who are obedient to its precepts . . . to so high an eminence has its credit been advanced that in every age monarchs themselves have been promoters of the art, have not thought it derogatory from their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the gavel, have patronized our mysteries and joined our assemblies."

It might as well be admitted from the outset that the precise origin of the society has not been determined. And further it is highly unlikely that it ever will be. The earliest records which are known to exist go back for only a few hundred years at most. But it is important to note that the oldest of them give evidence of a history much more ancient of which at present no written records exist. By the work of careful students a list of about seventy ancient documents has been compiled and listed more or less in the order of age and importance. The oldest of these is believed to have been written about the year 1390 or almost six hundred years ago. According to the legend set forth in it the Craft originated in the land of Egypt and in due time came to England in the time of King Athelstan. In a series of fifteen articles the regulations then presumed to have been established are set out. The material makes entertaining reading for anyone interested and capable of understanding the English language of that time.

We are not here concerned with the accuracy of the legend. But it is interesting that at such an early time an organization which to a surprising extent taught the same principles as are inculcated by the Craft today not only existed but had then a forgotten origin.

Of the manuscripts referred to by far the greater number have been found since 1870. One remarkable thing is the similarity which exists among them as to the fundamental teaching emphasized. Apparently at that time Masonry was Christian stressing in charges and invocation the doctrine of the Trinity.

Curiously enough in spite of what has just been said for the earliest existing records of active Lodges we are indebted to Scotland. There is in existence a minute book dated 1599 and in the minutes of the Lodge at Edinburgh dated June 8th, 1600, John Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, is recorded as present and as having attested the record. Many distinguished names appear in the records of Scottish Lodges during the early seventeenth century. The point of all this is that speculative, as opposed to operative, Masonry was well established at that time and the history of the society though unrecorded so far as we know must date far back of that period.

But it may be asked what about claims put forward for Freemasonry as having been existent in the days of King Solomon or earlier? The answer must be that there is not as yet available evidence which any reliable historian could accept to support such claims.

Historical research follows two main lines. One consists of the search for documents, which when found are tested for age and reliability; the other consists in the search for monuments with inscriptions and for tools and implements which may throw light on the story of the past. Both these lines have been

followed by students of Freemasonry in the last three-quarters of a century. We may get further reliable information, but at present we know:

1. There are records of Lodges carrying on a speculative basis three hundred and forty years ago.

2. Existing records show that at least six hundred years ago organizations which are clearly the fore-runners of the Lodges of today were in operation.

An antiquity of the above length is at least respectable. Those who are not content with it must either rely on their imagination or wait for further research to uncover new information.

### THE ORIGINAL PLAN OF FREEMASONRY

With this issue of the *Bulletin* will come to each Lodge two copies of the first part of a paper with the above title from the pen of V. W. Bro. W. R. Davis, of Calgary. The paper will appear in six monthly parts and is published to the Lodges under the auspices of The Committee on Research and Education.

The thesis developed by V. W. Bro. Davis is his own and bears evidence of long thinking and careful planning of material. The Committee does not necessarily subscribe to all or any of the speculations developed by V. W. Bro. Davis, but does feel pleased to be empowered to present his able paper to his brethren.

It is strongly recommended that in every Lodge a competent Brother be appointed to read in Lodge each section of the paper as it is received and to lead any discussion which may develop.

One copy is provided for the use of the appointed Brother and the other for the Lodge files.

The Committee expresses its sincere thanks to V. W. Bro. Davis for according it the privilege of presenting his paper under its auspices.

### THE HOUR OF TRIAL

From *The Masonic Bulletin*

Published by the Committee on Masonic Education and Research of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia

"Nor will you, I trust, sink beneath the influence of terror now that your trial approaches," are words that may be spoken as directly to a nation as to an individual.

The stage is set once again. It requires no whispered inside information nor any extraordinary insight to see that the ruffians of humanity have again resolved to extort by force that which they could not gain by merit. Diligence and patience are unsatisfactory methods. They prefer recourse to violence. One nation has been laid prostrate within the last few weeks.

Once again the challenge is to fortitude and fidelity. Human freedom is a sacred trust. It is a heritage received from our forefathers who won it by sacrifice—even unto death. Have we the courage to maintain it pure and unsullied? We have built the state but we have believed that the state was made for man not man for the state. There is a world of difference here. Liberty and justice—all that makes life worth living are affected thereby.

Undoubtedly the hour may be one of agony but to a just and virtuous man death has no terrors

equal to the stain of falsehood and dishonour. These things are to be pondered. Is the symbolism of Freemasonry of any practical value to the man who has to do the world's work and perhaps fight the world's cruel battles? Let us not forget that ideas and ideals are more practical than material quantities. Freemasonry may not give a man a new gadget for his hand but it will put a new resolve in his heart. It may not make money but it makes manhood. This is the world's greatest need.

The greatest gift that may be bestowed on a man is the light of truth. Freemasonry seeks to open the eyes of a man to the light of truth—to help him take that point of view from which he may see life whole and see it steadily. It summons his soul with a great challenge to high and worthy living. The Master Mason knows he has met such a summons.

### CONCERNING THE SOURCES OF MASONIC LAW

By Bro. C. W. NIELSEN,  
Research Lodge No. 194, of Wellington, New Zealand  
PART I

It has been suggested that the subject of this paper might with advantage be introduced, touching in the briefest manner on what appear to me to be some of the distinctions and considerations to be noted. First, I would remark in a general way that, in reference to the legal system regulating our fraternity, it is common to employ the term "Masonic jurisprudence" in the sense in which the term "Masonic Law" would be more appropriate, if not more accurate. There is, of course, such a thing as Masonic Law, a system and code of rules and government peculiar to the organization, but is there a "science" of law in the sense in which the term "jurisprudence" is properly used, peculiar to the Masonic cult, justifying the use of the polysyllabic term in preference to the more exact phrase "Masonic law"? I think not, but on the contrary it appears to me that the term to which incidentally I venture to draw attention is a mere grandiloquent, but erroneous, substitution. Frequently it has been used as a compendious description of the mass or body of law embraced in Grand Lodge enactments, and in that application its employment is wholly misleading, for as I hope to establish, that branch of the subject is not of the prime importance when compared with other constituents of the Masonic legal fabric.

The origin of our present-day highly organized and developed system may be said to be found in the necessity which impelled the devising of means for reconciling conflicting interests, and setting up some central form of government to regulate and enforce the reconciliation of such interests. In the growth and development of the Masonic body there is an analogy to the birth and gradual evolution of States and ordered communities, or the emergence of man from his primitive condition, more or less isolated, to that of ever-increasing dependence upon his fellows, in which he forms a unit in a complex organization. The original unit in the process of evolution is seen in the family with the male parent as the head and front, who had absolute dominion

over the affairs and fortunes of the house, if one may use that term, and whose will was law. By degrees the family became merged in or swallowed up by the tribe with its chosen or, may be, self-imposed leader of chieftain, and later we detect the transition to the principality or embryo State, and eventually the kingdom or supreme State with its head, representative of law, order, and power.

An example of arrested development, or probably reaction and reversion to the primitive order of things, may be noted in the case of the Chinese people, where, notwithstanding the evidences of a highly cultured civilization preceding that of the Occidentals, the authority of the father of the family is supreme in many respects, and is permanent during his life, and the organization of the community does not extend beyond that of the village.

In due time the exigencies and complexities of the social structure, and the interdependence of the members of the community, demand the adoption of a code or standard of rules to which conduct is required to conform, and by means of which the multitudinous claims of the citizens are mutually harmonized and regulated, and so the state becomes the arbiter of justice and right, and enforces its pronouncements by sanctions or means of compulsion having behind them the whole power and authority of the body politic. The primitive expedient or weapon of force gives way to the calculation and balancing of conflicting interests and in result the avoidance of waste is promoted, and more or less certainty of continuity of the life of the community ensured.

Similarly, the modern complex fraternal structure of ours developed from a stage in which the unit was the Lodge leading an isolated existence, responsible to no outside authority, and bound in its conduct only by its regard, jealously entertained, for tradition. Long before the revival, the operatives, so the story runs, held their annual assemblies, as they were called, in York and elsewhere, but it has not been suggested that these meetings were the rallying ground of the Lodges assembling at the behest of an over-riding authority, although, according to the legend, they were on occasions under such circumstances confirmed in or granted special privileges by persons in a position to influence their fortunes.

Prior to the reorganisation of the Craft, its affairs had reached a low ebb for reasons peculiar to the operatives. The speculative element had become distinctive, and it felt the need for the organization and adoption of a system of control whereby isolation should give way to union, and absolute independence should yield to a mutually chosen authority in the interests of the Craft. By the co-operation of the time-immemorial Lodges the first sovereign body was formed, and in this body, which owed its existence and authority to their activity and submission, they vested sovereignty over themselves. It was a beginning, the transition from the family to the tribal condition, and we know that numbers of Lodges for varying periods stood aloof and pursued their old mode of existence.