



GRAND LODGE BULLETIN

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

Reporting Progress

AT the last Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, after mature deliberation and spirited debate, there was passed by the required two-thirds majority a resolution which in operation is already giving promise of having far-reaching and beneficial effect on the life of the Craft in the Province.

The subject of that resolution was the reduction of the constitutional fee for the making of a Mason and the main argument of its proponents the financial status of young men under present day conditions.

The reduction of the constitutional minimum, however, was but the first necessary step in the plans of the movers. They believed that admission into Masonry should be something more than a thing to be bought for a fee but realizing that a fee is necessary, believed that fee should be measured by ability to pay.

Successful in having the constitutional minimum reduced to a point within the reasonable ability of the desired type of young man but at the same time left at a point where some effort was required, the sponsors of the Grand Lodge resolution returned to their own Lodge and proposed an amendment to its By-Laws, grading the initiation fee in four increasing steps from the new constitutional minimum rising with maturing years in petitioners and, therefore, generally with increasing earning capacity. The amended By-law, carefully worded and, after due notice, thoroughly debated, was carried in the Lodge with enthusiastic unanimity, approved by the Grand Master and recorded in the Official By-Laws of the Lodge.

For some months nothing happened for, of course, there was not the slightest attempt at "advertising" the new state of affairs. Then the first petitioner appeared aged 23. Then another and another, sons of member brethren and their friends, until the Lodge which had had no candidate in three years has in as many months six highly desirable petitioners and all under thirty years of age.

Here is a Lodge with an average age well over forty years whose membership in the last five years has dropped by death, dimission and suspension by more than thirty per cent, awakening to new life by the coming of young men and young enthusiasms. That, we believe, is progress worth reporting.

But it has not been done without qualms on the

part of some. "Putting Masonry on the bargain counter" has been a common if rather ill-timed comment but the sponsors of this revival for young men are not discouraged. They are fully aware of the dangers of ill-considered haste and every move has been canvassed with scrupulous care before initiating action. The brethren of the Lodge have been impressed with the need for extra care in the selection of candidates and for calm deliberation in investigation. No great influx is needed nor desired but an infiltration of younger men is imperative and, carefully controlled, the methods adopted and now operative seem to be bringing about the hoped-for results.

Opportunity for obtaining Masonic knowledge much more advanced than is usually offered will be presented to these young men in due course and by active fellowship in every Masonic way, the Lodge hopes by careful selection, dignified training and attractive teaching to make Masons, appreciative of their heritage and ready to labor in the quarries for the continuing supremacy of our ancient fraternity.

It is gratifying to the sponsors of this important change to find no less a Mason than the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York, in his address to that august body in 1938, suggesting a fee reduction for younger petitioners. Verily a case of the lion and the mouse with Alberta in the role of the smaller creature.

A.M.M.

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CENTENARY OF FREEMASONRY IN AUSTRALIA

The first hundred years of Freemasonry in South Australia were celebrated last year, by the Lodge of Friendship, No. 1, Adelaide. The Lodge was formed in England and consecrated on October 22, 1834, and met in England. It was not until August 11, 1838, that the first meeting was held in South Australia.

The greatest gathering of Masons ever held in the Southern Hemisphere witnessed the celebration, in Sydney, of the Jubilee of the formation of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales. The event took place on October 5, 1938, in the presence of nearly six thousand Masons, including members of every Grand Lodge in Australia and New Zealand.

ANCIENT LANDMARKS

By A. E. OTTEWELL

(Article Five)

IN this article we shall deal with those Ancient Landmarks which have to do with the Grand Master and his prerogatives. These are five in number as follows:

1. The fraternity is governed at all times by a Grand Master who is elected from the body of the Craft.
2. It is the prerogative of the Grand Master to preside over every assembly of the Craft wherever or whenever held.
3. It is the prerogative of the Grand Master to grant dispensations for conferring degrees at irregular times.
4. It is the prerogative of the Grand Master to give dispensations for opening and holding lodges.
5. It is the prerogative of the Grand Master to make Freemasons at sight.

The office of Grand Master is much older than the institution of Grand Lodge. There has always been a Grand Master from earliest times. And it is essential that he be elected from the body of the Craft. Formerly, apparently this was done at a General Assembly but when owing to extended membership for the convenience of organization, the Grand Lodge was set up as a representative body, the election of Grand Master was conducted in that body. The important point is the Grand Master is installed not as the presiding officer of Grand Lodge but as **Grand Master of Masons** within the Jurisdiction. It is his right to preside over Grand Lodge as well as over every other assembly of Freemasons whenever he is present.

The ancient usage is that whenever he is present the Grand Master has the right to preside over any assembly of Freemasons. As has been pointed out above, this applies to Grand Lodge as well as to any subordinate or district lodge. It arises not from any specific legislation of any Masonic body but from an ancient established custom in use before the present types of organization were in existence.

The Grand Master has the power by dispensation to permit degrees to be conferred at irregular times. According to an authority quoted by Dr. Mackey it was the custom prior to the reorganization of Freemasonry in 1717 for a sufficient number of Freemasons to meet at any time and confer degrees and practise Masonry. But at the time of the reorganization, the members of the Craft voluntarily surrendered the right to operate in this way to Grand Lodge. However, they could not surrender the authority of the Grand Master for it did not belong to them. The present statutory limitations which prescribe a stated time between petition and initiation and before advanced degrees can be conferred, are later innovations. Therefore, the Grand Master of ancient right may, at his discretion, by dispensation set aside such regulations and permit any or all degrees to be conferred without any time limit whatever.

Another prerogative of the Grand Master is that of granting dispensations for the opening and holding of lodges. He, therefore, can grant to a sufficient number of Freemasons the right to meet and confer degrees. Lodges established in this way are called "Lodges under Dispensation." "They are strictly creatures of the Grand Master, created by his authority, existing during his will and pleasure, and liable at any moment to be dissolved at his command. They may be continued for a day, a month, or six months; but whatever be the period of their existence, they are indebted for that existence solely to the grace of the Grand Master." (Mackey's Jurisprudence of Freemasonry, p. 8)

The Grand Master has the power to make Masons at sight. This does not mean that he may do so in an irregular way. He cannot without the assistance of the necessary number of Masons, confer degrees. But what he can do is to summon the required number of Masons, form them into an occasional lodge, and therein on sight of the candidate without a previous probation, initiate and confer other degrees upon him. This procedure is merely the exercise of powers previously described. The Grand Master can give a dispensation for a number of Masons at a distance to meet and confer degrees. He can, by dispensation, permit degrees to be conferred at irregular times. It follows, then, that he can himself form an "Occasional Lodge," superintend the conferring of degrees therein, and dissolve the lodge when the purpose for its establishment has been served. Or to state the principle in other words, the Grand Master may himself exercise the authority which he has the power to confer on others.

LOGGES, BUDGETS AND FINANCES

FREEMASONRY'S existence as an institution, its worthiness to exist, is dependent upon the worthwhileness of its service to man. While Freemasonry never seeks to have its members act collectively as a body, except in dispensing its charity to suffering humanity, and while discountenancing mass action, it does aspire to influence its members to high ideals of living and of conduct in their association with their brother men.

To exert Masonry's usefulness effectively within its self-imposed rules, the privilege of assembly is necessary. Hence the Lodge, where men of good repute and God-fearing, without regard for worldly condition or station, may meet upon the level, exchange views, and part upon the square.

There is good sense in this. Hate cannot abide in the heart which really knows another; understanding dislodges it, making room for sympathy of boundless range, opening the door to toleration and co-operation, leading to peace, love, prosperity, happiness; these spell "Brotherhood attained," as understood by Masons.

Just as they are essential to human life, so are material things essential to the life and usefulness of the Masonic Lodge, if the Lodge would function in its legitimate sphere. . . .

Worries incident to financial embarrassment distract and make for inefficiency. The Lodge which

cannot carry its head high has lost the art of service and the Lodge which cannot serve is without excuse for existence. These truths have become real to our membership. . . .

Knowledge of the balance in each Lodge fund is a deterrent to thoughtless spending, and leads to good business methods and to confidence in the Lodge's stability and ability to serve its purpose and justify its existence. In such a Lodge the Mason receives inspiration and goes forth strengthened in his resolve to be faithful to the ideals of the Craft.

Jacob C. Klinek, Grand Master of New York
in his address to Grand Lodge, 1938.



SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF FREEMASONRY FOR 1938

By J. HUGH TATSCH

Director of Education and Librarian, Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M.
of Massachusetts

A comprehensive glance at Freemasonry through the world for the year 1938 presents a picture which cannot be described in a few words. In the first place, in spite of all attempts to maintain an aloofness from the political and religious currents of nations, Freemasonry has been dragged into the picture in many places—always against its own volition and usually with malice aforethought by those who have been in positions of dictatorial authority. Speaking for the principles of Freemasonry in general, and for the English-speaking Craft and its similarly-minded associates in particular, the Fraternity has strongly resisted any efforts to become involved in the welter of world turmoil, except on the broad basis of brotherhood and non-sectarian service. Yet Freemasons of Continental Europe have not been able to maintain so consistent a position, and the variations which are inevitable in an organization which is never dogmatic, but always tolerant toward the individual beliefs and rights of others, have given rise to activities and interpretations which are confusing not only to the non-Masonic world but also to members of the Masonic Fraternity. No subject is fraught with more interest than the trend and activities of Freemasonry in Europe today.

A cursory glance at the Masonic structure immediately reveals that there are two principal groups—English-speaking Freemasonry as the older and foremost, and Continental or Latin Freemasonry as the other. Basic forces which have expressed themselves racially throughout the centuries of mankind's written history have also permeated the Freemasonry of these two groups, with the result that inescapable divergences exist in Masonic interpretation and practical expression. The roots of Freemasonry lie deep in the soil of democratic England, where the Anglo-Saxon fought bitterly and long against encroachment. In time he subtly vanquished the Normans just as they, in earlier centuries, had yielded to the softening influence of France after raiding its shores from the Northland. The coming of the Norman to Albion's shores, and the revitalizing of English life through new economic, political and religious trends,

prepared the way for the ancient and gentle Craft today known as Speculative Freemasonry. Fundamentally Operative, it nevertheless partook of surrounding influences and has been transmitted to us as a sacred heritage from unknown founders. They were not essentially the individuals who brought it into flower, but rather the avenues through which a still greater force in the affairs of humankind found expression.

Closely allied with English-speaking Freemasonry are the Brethren of the Scandinavian countries and The Netherlands, where the same conservatism exists as in the British Isles. With these groups were also counted the two Grand Lodges of Czechoslovakia, both of which have gone into dormancy, if not oblivion, through the recent political events in their country. Mention should also be made of the Grand Loge Independante et Reguliere pour la France et les Colonies Francaises ("the little Grand Lodge with a big name"), the smallest and least known of the three Grand Lodges functioning in France, insofar as France itself is concerned.



As one glances over the map of Europe today, he is struck by the fact that while Freemasonry was active in practically every part of the Continent some time or other during the past two centuries, today tremendous areas are devoid of the beneficent influences of our Fraternity. The light of Freemasonry shines brightly only upon the western shores. Russia, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, Albania, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Lichtenstein and Luxemburg are in utter Masonic darkness. The Scottish Rite has been extinguished in Roumania, though the National Grand Lodge still glimmers. While there are governing Masonic bodies in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, their influence is comparatively feeble. Freemasonry exists in Greece, where Craft Masonry and the Scottish Rite are stronger than in the neighboring countries, because of the closer alliances with Great Britain, both politically and Masonically. King George of Greece is a Freemason, 33°. Freemasonry was revived in Poland after the World War, and a Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite formed; but press dispatches of November 25th reported the suppression of the Rite, though it was previously known that government officials had been forbidden to be members of the Masonic Fraternity. A bill introduced in Parliament some months ago provided for a penalty of five years' imprisonment for Polish citizens active in Freemasonry, either at home or abroad. The Grand Lodge of Finland, in its fifteenth year of existence, has had difficult times because of economic stress and anti-Masonic agitation, but at last reports its five lodges were facing improved conditions. Switzerland, Belgium and France have strong Grand Lodges and Supreme Councils of the Scottish Rite, but they do not enjoy the security that we do in America. For reasons that need not be discussed herein, the people of those countries have been led to believe that Freemasonry is one of the great causes of economic and social unrest and to be a Freemason in those lands requires a courage

which many of us would not dare display were we living under similar conditions. Hence we should be charitable in our criticisms of Freemasons in such lands, for too often they are obliged to resort to defensive tactics which can only be understood by those familiar with terrain and the forces opposing them.

It will be seen, therefore, that Freemasonry in Europe today is at its best in England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and The Netherlands. In all of these countries, with Norway and The Netherlands excepted, members or close associates of the Royal Houses are leaders or affiliates of the Fraternity. The Netherlands has contributed to Masonic history in the person of H.R.H. Prince Frederick William Carl (1797-1881) who was a Freemason for sixty-six years, and served the Grand Lodge as Grand Master from 1816 to 1881, taking office when only nineteen years of age.

The Netherlands entered largely into the 1937 Masonic picture through victories of Freemasons in the courts, a suit having been brought for slander against a priest who charged Freemasonry with introduction of erotic films, obscene literature and nudist cults. The priest was found guilty and fined. The editor of the periodical, "Bon Peuple," who had been found guilty of defamatory charges against the Freemasons was fined 75 florins or 25 days in jail, again losing the case when he made appeal against the judgment. A Masonic educational campaign over the radio, wherein Masonic principles and practices were discussed in a dialogue, served to inform the Dutch people that Freemasonry was a private society, rather than a secret one in the usual sense of the term.

Extracted from a report presented to Grand Lodge, December 14th, 1938.

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MASONIC SCHOLARSHIP AT WORK IN AMERICA

FOR many years Masonic Lodges of Research have been doing excellent work under the Grand Lodges of England and Ireland in organizing and classifying Masonic material, as well as clarifying historic phases of the Craft. Among such Lodges are the famous Quatuor Coronati, No. 2076, of London, the Leicester Lodge of Research No. 2429 and the Lodge of Research No. 200, Dublin, Ireland.

In 1931 the Grand Lodge of New York granted a charter for a Lodge to be known as the American Lodge of Research and placed at its command all its resources for material and assistance. No degrees are conferred by this Lodge and its study is limited to American Freemasonry. Provisions to this effect were placed in the charter so that it could devote full time to its objectives, which are stated as follows:

To encourage Masonic research and study by its members and others:

Present their findings and conclusions to the Lodge for discussion and interchange of judgment;

Publish at convenient intervals Transactions containing such portions of the addresses and discussions as may be desirable to print;

Publish new Masonic books of outstanding merit;

Reproduce or print Masonic documents of historical importance;

Reprint scarce Masonic books and pamphlets.

Its membership, which is of two classes, is by affiliation only. One class consists of Active Members drawn from state-wide jurisdiction who may become such only upon invitation. This group may not exceed one hundred. The other group, not limited as to number, is known as Corresponding Members. Entitled to all privileges of the Lodge except voting and holding office, they embrace Master Masons in good standing in any regular Masonic Lodge anywhere in the world, also Masonic Libraries, and Masonic Lodges. A Corresponding Member may become an Active Member when he has demonstrated a certain degree of Masonic scholarship as indicated by his literary contributions to the Lodge.

The Lodge holds quarterly meetings at which the various contributions by both Active and Corresponding Members are read. Since its inauguration in 1931, the Lodge has the following accomplishments to its credit: the tabulation of 2,425 Revolutionary officers and men in the ranks who were Masons; the production of the superb Degree music of Jan Sibelius, the famous Finnish composer, and other Masonic compositions from the past, also twenty-seven major dissertations and forty-two minor miscellaneous contributions on various subjects. This matter has been printed, together with one hundred and seventy-four illustrations as a part of the transactions.

The Master of the Lodge is Charles H. Johnson, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York and now Grand Secretary of that Grand Lodge. The chairman of the membership committee is Thomas C. O'Donnell. Richardson Wright is Secretary of the Lodge, with offices in the Masonic Hall, 71 W. 23rd Street, New York City.

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Lincoln respected the rights of all men, rich or poor, high or low. Especially did he respect men who had worked their way up in the world and did not consider that they were to be criticized or condemned because they had worked their way up from poverty to success. Lincoln said of such men, "No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty." Again he said, "Let him that is homeless not pull down the house of another but let him labor diligently to build one for himself."

—James Nankivell.

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