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Grand Lodge Bulletin

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The *BALLOT* - A Vitally Important Privilege

The material herewith, given recently to the members of an Alberta Lodge in the form of an address, is intended to remind the Brethren of the important and responsible duty imposed upon them as they approach the altar to cast a ballot.

It is my privilege to speak to you for a short time this evening about one of the most important duties that members of our Order have to perform while attending a Lodge; I refer to balloting. Doubtless many will recall instances when there has been some dissatisfaction with the result of a ballot, principally because the ballot resulted in the rejection of one seeking the privilege of membership in Freemasonry.

One cannot but sympathize with the feelings of personal friends when an applicant is rejected and sympathize as well, with the rejected petitioner, especially when it is difficult to understand the reason behind such rejection.

One of the safeguards of Freemasonry, however, is that no man can join the Order except by unanimous or nearly unanimous favorable secret ballot and nothing should be permitted to interfere with that almost unique safeguard, nor should members at any time be intimidated in the free exercise of their balloting privilege. If the standards for admission of candidates are too far relaxed, membership in the Fraternity would come to mean little, indeed; but if, on the other hand, our standards can be shown to be too rigid, membership expansion could be so seriously affected that Freemasonry, with all its possibilities for good, might soon die out. The same strangulation could occur if a mere handful of members were to so misuse their power and so keep out all petitioners.

Balloting is a serious responsibility; let us make sure that we take heed of its properly intended exercise. In the first place we must remember that we are living in a world peopled exclusively with imperfect people, none being perfect. Moreover, the Fraternity seeks not to condemn, but to help humanity, and anything that we may do to that end is good Freemasonry.

The underlying test in balloting is to determine whether it would be better for Masonry if the Lodge were to accept, or to reject, a certain petitioner. We require that a petitioner must be of

good report, and well recommended; the welfare of the Lodge, as well as its effectiveness, is in no small degree interwoven with its standing in the community; no organization that stands for high principles can reasonably expect to be popular at all times with all people, but being popular is far different from being worthy of respect and it would be a needless handicap to accept for membership anyone whose standing in the community was such as to place the craft in the position of professing high standards, but accepting as members those whose lives are perpetual symbols of the opposite, for the man whose iniquity is so cleverly concealed that he may still be a popular idol, while he may be a transgressor of the laws of God or man, should nevertheless be rejected. We must seek character, rather than popularity.

Let us consider for a moment those petitioners who are really good men and true, but who may be unjustly condemned by their neighbors, or the man who has, perhaps, exhibited character weakness in by-gone years, but who has sincerely reformed and needs help and encouragement in his efforts to lead a wholesome life. The ultimate welfare of the Lodge must still, of course, be the decisive test. No man has an absolute or inherent right to membership in a Masonic Lodge; the Fraternity is not a reform school, nor yet a rescue mission; it is under no obligation whatever to accept too great a handicap in the mere acquisition of additional membership. On the other hand, Freemasonry has no more fundamental objective than the building of character and many men have been helped by association with the Craft, and, through its teachings, have been led to reform themselves. It would be better for a Lodge to sacrifice its very existence through fidelity to principle than to survive by surrendering its principle, and that very thing has been done, I venture to say, in every country where Freemasonry has been suppressed by the demands of dictatorship, or where its sound influence lent fear to the ambitions of men. It might well be the duty of a Lodge to accept a proper candidate even in defiance of popular or official wrath or condemnation.

We must consider petitioners who have made serious mistakes in their lives in the past, but who

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Editorial

From time to time Lodges receive requests from the families of unaffiliated Masons to conduct Masonic funerals on behalf of members who pass away and, when the necessary formality of the request being made through the Lodge of the deceased has been taken care of there would be little likelihood of the local Lodge failing to meet the request in accordance with established custom.

Similarly, and of late with increasing frequency, it is becoming necessary for lodges on the prairies to request the courtesy of Masonic funerals for members who have moved to other parts of Canada, notably to British Columbia which, with its moderate climate, has a very marked attraction to older persons on retirement from active participation in industry, business or the professions. That Lodges receiving such requests are generous indeed in their response is a matter for the deepest satisfaction and gratitude.

In many cases, however, especially when the death of a member occurs without reasonable warning or in a strange environment, the widow or other members of the family may be at a loss as to the procedure they may follow.

With this in mind, an article recently appearing in the British Columbia Masonic Bulletin may prove worthy of mention in these columns which will, we hope, be fairly widely read, not only by members residing in Alberta, but by the very substantial number now resident in our sister province to the West and still eligible to receive this paper by virtue of their continued membership in a Lodge constituent to the Grand Lodge of Alberta.

The article outlines something of the service available through the establishment of the Vancouver Masonic Cemetery in nearby Burnaby. The correspondent points out that the cemetery has been designed to meet the needs of members of the Order and their immediate relatives and that Masons from outside the Province of British Columbia may take advantage of the service, should they so desire.

Pictured as a place of beauty in which permanent care is provided, it may well be that when the demands of time make it necessary to arrange the final resting place, that this invaluable service will meet the needs of some of our members, presently living among strangers, and who wish their mortal remains to find seclusion in an area which will, in the years that lie ahead, be under the constant and thoughtful care of those with a specific interest in members of the Fraternity and those nearest and dearest to them.

The subject herein, while perhaps a painful one, might well receive consideration and decision while these factors are still possible, so that a delicate problem might be solved for those living among strangers and Bro. M. E. Dickson, Secretary of the Cemetery Association, Standard Building, 510 West Hastings St. Vancouver would be pleased to assist any member desiring complete information.

—S.C.H.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KEY ?

Many years ago the key was used as a symbol in the ritual of the Three Degrees of Masonry; a number of old manuscripts and catechisms reveal this fact.

It is interesting, too, to reflect that the use of keys and locks is very old. Hundreds of years ago, in ancient Egypt, the forerunners of our modern cylinder locks were used. It is a long story of crude beginnings and ultimate refinement; large clumsy locks were used on prison doors and immense storage rooms. Later keys and locks with a great deal of ornamentation were developed. Then the goldsmiths and silversmiths made still greater refinements and the lock and key came into use for the safety of personal possessions and also for personal adornment. Today the lock and key are of tremendous use in many different ways.

Years ago the key also took on symbolic meanings. In ancient times the wife carried the household keys, as key bearer for her husband. In ancient Greece and Rome small keys blessed by the priests had religious and spiritual significance. The family, various officers of the Church, and cities, used the key exclusively as a symbol. The two crossed keys, as a symbol, show up in many places even today. Poets and writers, through the ages, have found and still find great use for the key as analogy, to make clear or reveal that which is otherwise hidden. And in our Great Light, the Holy Bible, there are a number of references to the key in both the Old Testament and the New.

Wherever there is a puzzle or a problem, then, we are still 'looking for the key' ! In a sense it is because we are looking for a key that we become interested in Masonry. In this same sense it is because we find first one key and then another that we unlock one chamber of knowledge after another, and thus ever find more Light and more Truth. For the key can be used to unlock and open the mind, as well as to close and lock fast those things which are to remain secret.

In Masonry sometimes a great deal is made of the Lost Word, and considerable thought is given as to how the Word was lost and how it is to be found again. In this, too, there is a key which, when properly used, reveals that for which we are seeking. And it may be that more was lost than we know when the key, as a symbol, disappeared from the ritual of the Three Degrees.

Is there, then, a connection between the lost key and the Lost Word? Here is a question for the Speculative Mason, an opportunity to try a few mental keys of his own. It may be that the key is not actually lost, and again, if the words found in the first verse of the Book of St. John are properly related to those in the first verse of the Book of Moses, called Genesis, it may be found that the Lost Word really is not lost, unless it be to those who have not found the True Light in the course of their everyday lives, in their meditations and in their worship.

If this be so, then the key is within the heart and mind of each individual. To find it each man must look within himself.

—Masonic Journal of South Africa.

WITHIN THE CRAFT IN ALBERTA

BOW RIVER LODGE NUMBER ONE MARKS SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

On January 28, 1959, Alberta's No. 1 Lodge celebrated the 75th Anniversary of its Institution, having been instituted on that date in 1884 under the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. Bow River Lodge No. 1 assumes an important place in Masonic history in this Grand Jurisdiction, the Fiftieth Anniversary of which was celebrated in 1955. M.W. Bro. Dr. J. N. Lindsay, whose picture we are pleased to reproduce herewith, was instrumental in the formation of the Lodge and during the anniversary ceremonies W. Bro. A. Little gave a most interesting historical review, outlining some of the difficulties which had been encountered by the hardy pioneers who were determined to lay the foundations of Freemasonry in the new country they had come to settle.

The Worshipful Master of the Lodge, W. Bro. A. D. Wilkie, invited R.W. Bro. D. S. Bareham, who was Master in 1922, to preside on this historic occasion and the other chairs were filled by Senior Past Masters. M.W. Bro. D. D. McQueen, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, was in attendance and was accompanied by M.W. Bro. the Rt. Reverend G. R. Calvert, Past Grand Master of Manitoba and a number of present and past Grand Lodge officers.

All members of Bow River Lodge with more than 35 years of service were received at the altar and the Most Worshipful the Grand Master presented Fifty Year Jewels to Bro. J. Harry Adams, Bro. Frank Collicutt and R.W. Bro. Robert D. Clarke.

A Service of Thanksgiving and Memorial was conducted by R.W. Bro. W. J. Collett, Grand Chaplain, with Bro. H. Rimmer, Past Grand Organist, presiding at the organ. The Guest Speaker, M.W. Bro. G. R. Calvert, Bishop of Calgary, delivered a most inspiring address, lauding the service of those who laid the foundations of our Craft in this Province and urging the present membership to greater service.

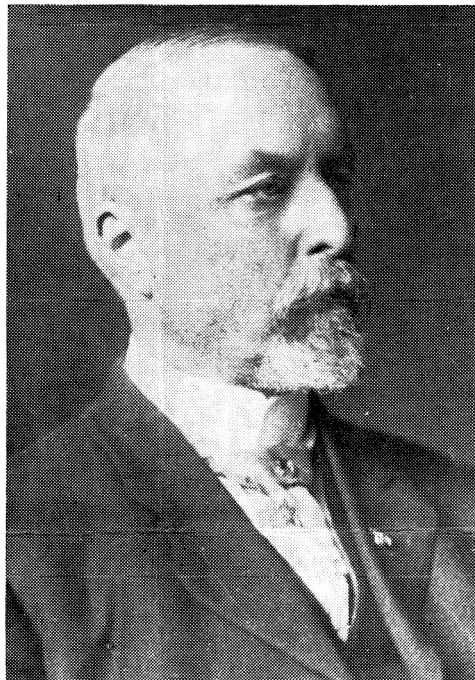
M.W. Bro. McQueen addressed the gathering at the banquet table and stressed the fact that Bow River Lodge, having attained the dignity of seventy-five years of sterling achievement, had a duty to act as leader to the Craft in Alberta during the present day.

It was announced during the evening that a new Lodge, to be known as Elbow River Lodge, was presently being formed in Calgary and it is indicative of the progressive tendencies of Bow River Lodge No. 1 that, while marking three quarters of a century of past accomplishment it would act as sponsor of the newest Lodge in the Province, thus indicating a desire to continue the splendid type of service which has marked its progress through the years; Alberta's original Lodge, Bow River No. 1, looks back with pride on the achievements of seventy-five years and looks forward, too, with confidence in the future as it exemplifies the true spirit of Freemasonry in

extending sponsorship to our newest Lodge, Elbow River.

Bow River Lodge No. 1 saw many of its members enlist in the service of the Empire in two world wars and has watched with justifiable pride as many from its membership have accepted posts of responsibility in community life, as well as in the Grand Lodge of Alberta.

Although lack of space prevents a lengthy history of this pioneer Lodge, Masons throughout the Grand Jurisdiction will join in saluting Bow River Lodge No. 1, as it celebrates this important anniversary.



M.W. BRO. DR. J. N. LINDSAY
A Promoter of Bow River Lodge No. 1.

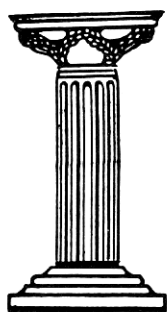
VERMILION LODGE PRESENTS JEWEL

On February 3, 1959, M.W. Bro. S. Carl Heckbert, a member of Vermilion Lodge No. 24, on behalf of the Lodge honoured W. Bro. Alfred E. Kaiser by the presentation of a Fifty Year Jewel.

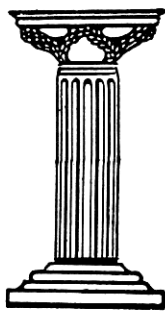
W. Bro. Kaiser joined Victoria Lodge, Sarnia, Ontario, some 53 years ago and was later installed as its Worshipful Master by M.W. Bro. D. F. McWatt, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada, in the Province of Ontario.

Moving to Detroit, Mich., W. Bro. Kaiser maintained his Masonic connection while a resident of that city; hearing the call of the West he moved to Edmonton, Alberta, in 1912 and became a Charter Member of Patricia Lodge in that city. He later affiliated with St. Alban's Lodge in St. Paul and more recently with Vermilion Lodge No. 24, of which he has since been a valued member.

W. Bro. Kaiser is presently holidaying in Honolulu with Mrs. Kaiser and it is safe to say that he will take advantage of every opportunity of further extending his Masonic knowledge by cementing brotherly relations with Freemasons as he enjoys the balmy breezes of the broad Pacific.



Between the Pillars



MY SON — MY BROTHER . . .

A great many Lodges in the Province of Alberta doubtless have father and son enjoying the privileges of Freemasonry together as was the case in King Solomon Lodge at Somerville, Massachusetts, in April, 1901, when William James Cogswill, the Worshipful Master, raised his son to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. After the charge had been given the father stepped forward and, with thrilling effect, addressed his son as follows:

"My son, you do not now realize what has been done for you. In your after life, as you more and more master the profound teachings, and experience the softening influence of this Order, you will undergo a mental growth you never thought possible.

"Tonight you became a member of an Order of friends and Brothers that has formed the basis of the greatest advancement accomplished by the human family. You are now a member of the most noble Order that has ever existed among men. From its inception the wisest, noblest, bravest and best of the race have been its members, and their wisdom and heroism and purity of their lives have not only served to retain the Order in its ancient purity, but have shed about it a flood of light and glory that has illuminated the world.

"Swear, my son, to be true and faithful to the teachings of this Order, and to let no hasty word or thoughtless act bring a blot upon this noble Institution, or cast a cloud over the memory of the great men who have in all the glorious past stood where you now stand.

"Let your conduct in your after life correspond with the principles of Freemasonry, and my remaining years will pass with pleasure and satisfaction. Ever remember that Masonry is a shield and not a sword, that, within its sheltering tenets, if your life is pure and just, you may ever find protection from the evil intentions of your enemies; but that Masonry does not foster or protect the wrong-doer, that it cannot be made a sword by which unjust warfare can be waged against your fellowman.

"All its principles, all its teachings, all its mysteries tend to the elevation and purification of man. I need but to remind you of the moment you were being made a Master Mason, how you shuddered at the possibility of crime, and with what love and admiration your heart turned toward every virtue.

"You are not an orphan in Masonry, you are a legitimate heir to all its rights, benefits and privileges; you are the son of a Mason who reveres its teachings and stands uncovered in the presence of its sublime mysteries.

"You are no longer my son only, but you are my Brother also, and when my life shall draw to a close, I hope to walk down into the dark waters of death steadied by the arm of my son and my Brother, and with a firm hope in that immortality of the soul, and a confidence in the all-saving power of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, so beautifully taught in the ritual of Freemasonry; may I fearlessly push off my little barque and reach that beautiful and blissful shore, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, cheered by the happy reflection that my son has proved himself worthy of that great honour that tonight has been conferred upon him." —Courtesy of the Indiana Freemason.

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have since led exemplary lives; surely there must be some 'statute of limitations,' some sufficient period of penance, for the individual who, having seen the error of his ways, has sought diligently and sincerely to retrace his steps and to so rectify his actions and his character as to effectively blot out misdeeds to which human nature has, at all times and in all situations, been subject. For what it may be worth, my view is that if a man has erred and if he has sincerely repented and reformed and if sufficient time has elapsed to give reasonable assurance that there will be no recurrence, the past should be forgotten; a mistake should not be considered irrevocable or irretrievable, and there are no more glorious annals than those of indomitable souls who, admitting their mistakes, have yet built them into foundations for victory, those who deny the right of the past to foreclose the present and the future. Courage and resolution can cancel out every defeat, the present can blot out the past. Perfection in a petitioner is rarely justified solely because of mistakes made in years gone by and the prospects for the future are much safer guides.

There are other classes of problem cases, composed, for instance, of men of good moral character but who are, nevertheless, un-cooperative, or so colourless as to promise to become little but additional deadwood, or, on the other hand, so aggressive as to be prospective threats of disharmony in the Lodge, or so improvident as to become likely charity charges. There would seem to be no good reason for accepting such petitioners, or any other type, whose admission would be harmful to the Lodge.

Giving the Lodge paramount consideration, but seeking to injure no one, searching for quality, rather than quantity, yet having tolerant regard for the frailties to which we are all subject, testing no man by his worldly wealth or outward appearance, but only by his real character we can surely deviate but little from the demands placed upon us by our obligations or from the dictates of right thinking.