

Cheap Freemasonry

Comp. Henderson had again the supervision of that allotment of the proceedings which included Canada, and very thoroughly reviews our proceedings for 1899. On the minimum fee question he pertinently says:

"We do not believe in cheap Masonry. We never did believe in it. We would not make the initiation fees prohibitory to all but millionaires, nor would we make them so low that every trifler who desires to gratify a passing whim could avail himself of them. We believe that from forty to fifty dollars is as low as any Lodge should confer its three degrees, and from twenty to twenty-five dollars is as cheap as any Chapter should make a Royal Arch Mason. To those who say that Masonry is too expensive as compared with other secret societies, we would reply that it does not enter into competition with any other society or organization. It is on a plane of its own, to which none other can aspire. It is a luxury not a necessity, and is only for those who can afford luxuries. There are numerous other worthy societies in which the poor man by paying a stipulated sum as an initiation fee, and for annual dues can enter into a contract by which he receives a fixed amount in the way of benefits in case of sickness, or of insurance in case of death. They have done great good and are truly the poor man's friend, and if Masonry is beyond his means they will supply its place to him.

"The man, no matter how poor his circumstances, who joined Masonry because of the good opinion he had of it, and who continued to be a Mason because he loved the symbolism and teachings "of Masonry, never objected to its price or found it oppressive. Freemasonry will be appreciated in proportion to the appreciation it shows for itself by not holding itself too cheaply."

Sources:

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1899, report on Foreign Correspondence – PENNSYLVANIA