

## Dry Continent

The drought prevailing on this continent at the present time does not seem to have (usually) the effect of lessening the attendance at the regular communications of subordinate Chapters. Both Canada and the United States have largely gone dry; but apparently the brethren take their places at the banquet table, drink toasts in lemonade or water, and still enjoy themselves. It is not so in all cases, however. There are some Chapters where the absence of what Mr. Dick Swiveller called a "modest quencher" has had a sad effect upon the attendance. It would be putting it crudely to say that a Royal Arch Mason attended his Chapter for the sake of what he got to drink, or that he could not get through the evening without his "whack" of the "rosy." That does not truthfully describe the situation. It is rather this — taking the case of a Chapter known to us. It has had a reputation in the past for pleasant refreshment sessions. The Companions knew each other intimately, and when they gathered about the refreshment board, after labour ended, they drank in moderation, smoked, yarned, speechified a little, and sometimes sang. There was never an instance of excess. All was pleasant and easy-going. The Companions no longer have those evenings, and some of the jolliest Companions of former days stay away or do not linger when the work is over. It seems to that particular Chapter that it is paying a big price for a problematical advantage. A Mason should and would do much for a weaker brother. But is the weaker brother helped? Sometimes we fear not. And there may be worse things than excess in drink, though that is bad enough. Prohibition is scarcely a logical remedy for the evils of drink — it is apt to punish the moderate man without helping the drunkard. There would not be many prohibitionists if we could 'eliminate drunkenness by some other means. Indeed the most powerful argument for prohibition (we are not looking at it as a political but as a moral question) is based on human pity for a drunkard's family. There are cases where it has been effective.

### **Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1920 Report on Foreign Correspondence - Conclusion