

The letter of Masonry is less important than the spirit

Grand Superintendents occupy a position of dignity and importance. The Grand First Principal can personally visit only a percentage of the Chapters in a jurisdiction as widespread as that of the Grand Chapter of Canada, but his Representatives are expected to inspect every Chapter in their various Districts, so that, at least once each year, the condition of every Chapter, within the jurisdiction, will be brought under official review. It is their duty to examine into the material prosperity of each body, and to aid and assist in promoting their welfare. Especial care should be given to those which, for some reason, are not making satisfactory progress. In such cases the cause should be determined and if possible removed.

The letter of Masonry is less important than the spirit, yet the work should be well done, and the authorized form should be carefully preserved, but the spirit is essential and the Grand Superintendents' influence and personality can do much to promote and foster the best traditions of the Craft.

Masonry is founded upon the fundamental principles of brotherly love, relief and truth. There cannot have been, is not now, and never will be, a period when man has not or will not crave for the love and comradeship of his fellow man. Throughout all time man will require counsel and assistance, as he meets the problems and difficulties of life, and there is no more precious possession than a friend upon whom he can rely.

'Buy the Truth and Sell it not' should be the guiding principle of a Mason's life.

These fundamentals constitute the spirit of Masonry. The practice of these principles throughout its long history has created a tradition as powerful as it is beneficent. There is no other human agency which binds men together with a tie so close, lasting and unselfish. Each finds in the other someone in whom he can confide and in whom he can safely trust.

It is this essence and spirit of Masonry that Grand Superintendents should cultivate and promote to the utmost of their ability. This is their great responsibility.

That the high office calls for men of character, personality, ability and devotion is self-evident, and the duty falls upon the Companions of selecting those who best measure up to the requirements. This duty should not be discharged lightly, but with full appreciation of personal responsibility.

The great War is behind us, but many and complex problems lie before us. The best and bravest, the choicest spirits of our land have fought and died that we, and those who follow, may live under the form and character of government which we ourselves create. Masonic Government is essentially democratic. We make the laws by which we will be governed and then obey them. Every Lodge or Chapter by free ballot elects its ruler and then all render ready obedience. Again the representatives of each Chapter form the Grand Governing Body, and elect a Chief Executive, and to this Governing Body, and its supreme head, is rendered a full measure of obedience and respect. The system combines individual liberty and freedom of action with obedience to constituted authority. Having regard to the qualifications which alone give access to the Order, the nature of the institution and its teachings, there rests upon its members a peculiar responsibility. A perfect Mason should be an ideal citizen. The extent to which we discharge the duties of high citizenship will be the measure of our worthiness as Masons. Those who fought on Flanders Fields have made it possible for us to build up something better and nobler than before and we dare not, must not, fail. Again this is the spirit of Masonry, for this, in a broad sense, is brotherly love, relief and truth. When we have found the way to do these things without thought of self, but all for the common good, then indeed the genuine secrets will have been found and the brotherhood of man will be an accomplished fact.

#### **Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1919 Report on Condition of Capitular Masonry