

What can be done during the refreshment hours to stimulate our desire for knowledge?

I have often marvelled how members are content to repair continually to refreshment, where they patiently sit and listen to the same monotonous programme month in and month out from year to year. I am not casting a stone at the social hour, nor desire to intimate that I myself do not participate, because I have had many happy evenings with my Companions around the table, and I trust I may have that privilege for years to come — but after all does it not become irksome? You have certainly had a good supper, enjoyed a smoke, and heard what we call a speech from almost everyone present, but what food have you provided for the mind? The next day can you really recall anything to cause serious thought? And so throughout the year, with possibly a few exceptions, we pursue the same course.

What can be done during the refreshment hours to stimulate our desire for knowledge, to invigorate our dormant energies, and at the same time be interesting and pleasant? It is true that we have enrolled under our banners many men of ability and learning, occupying the highest positions of trust, men of education in the commercial, political or religious world, men who are foremost in the professions and who stand high in the estimation of their countrymen. To these brethren I look for encouragement, to these brethren I appeal to aid us. I would suggest addresses or lectures on any interesting subject to which the lecturer is best adapted. Do not wait to be asked, Companion, but give the First Principal a hint that you are prepared to do what you can, and at the conclusion of the evening you will be rewarded by the satisfaction you have given your hearers, and you will go home feeling that you have done your duty as a Mason.

Another form of instruction and entertainment is the debate. Masonic subjects are preferable, because the Constitution will then be brought into the discussion, and that is the object most desired and the one that is close to my own heart. These functions need cost very little. Over the festive "coffee and crackers" the Companions may profitably exchange views, and with the J. W.'s toast all will disperse to their homes at a reasonable hour happy and contented. My views may not meet with the approval of many of my Companions, and it may be urged that most men are too busy to undertake the task, but I say without the least hesitation, that if you want a work accomplished you must give it into the hands of the busy man, and not to the laggard. I offer these suggestions in all earnestness, with the sole desire for the better development and elevation of our Royal Craft.

**Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1911, Address of the Grand First Principal, M. Ex. Comp. George Moore