

The Museum Collection

No.21

Gradus



Second of a series of Lecturettes for the
advancement of the Order

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Royal Antiquarian Order of Buffaloes, Grand Lodge of England

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— **Gradus** —

(A Step)

Dedicated to

**“EFFICIENCY IN
OUR ORDER”**

— *By* —

ROBT. Z. J. HUMPHRYS, K.O.M.

Authorised by The Grand Lodge of W.A.
R.A.O.B. G.L.E. Inc.

INTRODUCTION

This book in the series of Museum Collections is the latest in a long line of documents I have in my collection of bits and pieces to do with the history of the R.A.O.B. and is copied almost exactly as I can from the original copy, the difference being, that the original booklet size was four inches by six inches, I have enlarged this to fit in with the current size of the Museum Collections.

The typeface has been changed to Bookman Old Style and the size has also been changed to 12 point to make it a lot easier on the eye.

This publication deals with another of the series of short lectures given by Brother Robert Humphrys, K.O.M. to Lodges in the Grand Council of Australia and deals with the art of speech making and the successful running of a Lodge whilst in the “Chair”.

Readers of the Museum Collection No.20 “Light” by the same author will notice that Brother Humphrys has advanced in the Buffalo world by his elevation to Knight Order of Merit.

Grateful thanks are extended to Bro. Graeme McDonnell, Grand Secretary of the Grand Council of Australia for the supply of the original book.

Read and enjoy.

Mick Walker ROH, Grand Primo 2006

March 2009

FOREWORD

I fear that most of the lack of decorum when found in a Lodge room is caused by ignorance in Lodge procedure. This reference book, I hope, will enable all brethren to become conversant with the elementary fundamentals.

It so often appears to me that our meetings get slovenly and contorted, and business drags, causing an undertone of impatience. Chairmanship could be in many cases, more brisk, and floor members do not obey the rules of debate.

Speeches, too, are very often “rambly”, inaudible and decidedly weak. I have therefore given a few hints on the art of speaking, together with just a few suggested toasts.

I hope that these contents will help those who are worth while! May the others “measure” themselves!

Fraternally yours,

ROBT. Z. J. HUMPHRYS, K.O.M.

PREFACE.

In naming this compilation I can only sincerely hope it will be true to its name.

“Gradus” is the ancient Latin word meaning “a step”, and is the Latin root of such words as “progress”, “graduate”, etc., and also, indirectly, “degree”!

Many brethren have not the advantage of the assistance of a Lodge of Instruction and need a practical handbook which will guide them in their preparation for examination by the governing authority, in essential matters not contained in either our Ritual or Rule Book.

The method of sub headings facilitates quick reference by a glance at the index, and the hints on “speeches”, “chairmanship”, and “Rules of Debate” should prove beneficial to most brethren if only to “brush up” their knowledge.

May this book help brethren, in their careers as citizens, too, because we rejoice in their success both inside and outside our “Tyles”.

It may appeal to all Buffaloes that the ancient Latin root “civis” means: a citizen, and also a member of a “city”! With this broad hint, I place the contents of this compilation in the hands of all initiates, hoping it will help many to “a step” in advancement as successful Buffaloes and successful citizens!

ROBT. Z. J. HUMPHRYS, K.O.M.

CONTENTS

	Page
The Art of Speaking	6
Delivery	10
A Most Important Point	13
Toasts	15
Suggested Pattern Speeches, Grand Lodge	18
Chairmanship	24
Rules of Debate	26
Conclusion	35

THE ART OF SPEAKING

The art of speaking is an accomplishment every Brother should aim to acquire. While some natural aptitude must be pre-supposed in those who practice the art, success can only be achieved by cultivation. Everyone cannot aspire to be a great orator; for that, there is the need of a spark of inspiration or genius that is given only to a few; but with study and practice nearly everyone should become an acceptable, and even a powerful speaker.

Most important is it that the speaker should have clearly outlined in his mind what he is going to say. Clear thinking is above all things essential to clear speaking. Ideas cannot be clearly conveyed to those listening unless the speaker has them ordered and prepared in his mind. Having achieved this he must next strive for clear expression.

By reading he can get command of the value of essential wording. By writing notes, etc., he can learn to present his thoughts in logical sequence or order, and by reading aloud and rehearsals, he can get a clearness of speech, coupled with deliberation of manner and self possession or confidence.

All these things can be achieved by patient study and intelligent application. Outstanding quality in speaking comes more easily to the really earnest man than is often realised; the sincerity of the conviction that compels utterance inspires him. Sincerity is welcome everywhere.

Earnestness is infectious, and the speaker, who at the beginning of his speech convinces his audience that he is himself in earnest has gone a long way towards gaining their sympathy and his objective. The arts which

he can acquire by study and practice will do as much as is humanly possible of the rest.

The mysterious power which great orators undoubtedly exercise over their hearers and which so many people endeavour to explain by such phrases as nerve force, personal magnetism, and the like, is little more than the natural result of mere earnestness and a mastery of the subject in hand.

Whatever object the speaker has in view, whether it be to instruct, to sway a meeting, to obtain a conviction, to win a charge, to praise an individual or to propose a toast, the first essential is that he should know his facts. Clear thought can only be obtained by exact knowledge.

He should crystallise his subject into a single proposition, and group round that proposition all the facts and arguments he can possibly collect. This part of his work must be very elaborate, and calls for all the care possible. He should place everything in logical sequence, so that as he builds, it will mesh into a perfect framework and be the easier for his listeners to follow and appreciate.

He should not repeat himself or use unnecessary wording, but on the other hand he should not eliminate too much. It is probably more foolish to have inadequate elaboration than to have repetition, because the burden of proof is usually on the speaker.

The opening of a speech is an Introduction of the speaker and his subject or proposition; then follows the discussion of the subject and finally the conclusion.

In “preparing” a speech the introduction and conclusion may be left to the last, and can both be treated differently if desired.

The Introduction generally contains a statement of the proposition which the speaker proposes to establish; it may be personal in tone, intended to popularise himself to an audience which he has reason to believe is hostile to his views, it may be several other things; but it should always bear directly upon the matter in hand, and be short and to the point; it is the speaker's introduction of himself to the audience, and should therefore be "happy".

The conclusion is sometimes in two parts. The one being a summing up of points you profess to have established, and the other the "leaving off". The "summing up" would naturally be put in the same sequence as the discussion, but the "leaving off" may contain a direct reference to the original proposition and may be apologetic or denunciatory, but usually emotional!

Only practice and inspiration can enable a man to decide how he shall conclude a speech. There is an art in "leaving off", and sometimes only a natural artistic instinct can tell a speaker when and how to stop. But the final words should be carefully prepared, for a good speech may be spoiled by a tame and halting conclusion.

An explanation inspires me now. If you listen to a good carpenter driving a nail, there is a ring in every hit, but when the concluding hit arrives the hammer falls on nail and wood together. The nail is driven home. Let your speech be like that.

Let every fact and argument ring with the sincerity of a hammer stroke, while making points in your discussion, and, give that convincing stroke of finality with one fell stroke when concluding. Put plenty of emotion and sincerity into the last carefully prepared

phrase, and sit down! You will have knocked the nail right home and may have completed a good job. For instance, if I had only one nail to drive this is where I should “Leave off”. However I may not, I have other nails to drive!

An address read from a copy can never have the same convincing effect as a speech delivered with an air of spontaneity, because the delivery of a speech should be aided and emphasised by animation of manner and appropriate gesture; whereas, by reading, the speaker is hampered by manuscript and directs his attention to it, instead of to the audience.

There can be no doubt, however, that the system of writing out a speech does help materially to impress one’s mind beforehand and definitely should be done until the habit of easy speaking has been acquired. From the complete copy, moreover, a summary can be prepared of each sub argument in its correct sequence, which even most practised orators can advantageously use if on a lengthy subject.

The inexperienced speaker should also rehearse his speech privately beforehand to some friendly critic, who can advise him to advantage.

So, in preparing a speech:- study the subject; frame the argument; write the speech; memorise the essentials as much as possible; and condense it down to a few notes, as reminders of your logical sequence.

This done you need never fear to rise to your feet and try. At least you will have paid your audience the compliment of taking the utmost possible pains to have something intelligent to offer for their consideration.



DELIVERY

And now to deliver what you have prepared. There are many books on elocution to which reference may be profitably made, or better still, take lessons in elocution! This would profit your Lodge in more ways than one, and would gain you an accomplishment which would make your presence welcomed at social functions.

Proper management of the voice is the fundamental necessity in its effective use. The nostrils are the proper organs of breathing and abdominal breathing is the proper method. For public speaking, take in as much breath as comfortably possible, inflate the lungs with air, and never exhaust them, taking fresh breaths whenever and wherever opportunity offers.

Pronunciation is simply giving utterance to words. Words are formed by the action of the tongue, lips and nose and should be articulated by them and not by the organs of the throat. Every word should be delivered perfectly finished.

The golden rule on pronunciation is:- “Every letter and every syllable in a word should be heard, unless there is some explicit rule to the contrary”. Do not drawl or run words one into another. Some authorities suggest as a cure for slovenly speech, to occasionally read articles aloud, backwards. It certainly makes one pronounce each word in its entirety and on its own merit. One attempt will convince you how slovenly we get in ordinary conversation. A sympathetic audience may put up with a harsh voice, or stiffness of gesture, but cannot forgive failure in articulation. If a speaker will not take the trouble to make every word clear, he will forfeit the sympathy, and very speedily the patience, of his hearers. Furthermore, clearness of articulation

goes a long way towards compensating for weakness of voice. No pains therefore should be spared to make articulation precise and accurate.

Variation or Modulation of voice is necessary. In song the beauty and power depend on variation of notes in the musical scale, combined with other qualities, all of which are useful in the speaking tones as well. Every departure from a monotonous tendency in speech is a relief to the listener; and when the changes suit the meanings of the thoughts, the effect is more than doubly attractive.

Nature gave all humans a two octave speaking range, and cultivation can extend it both higher and lower. Yet most people use only a small part of one octave in speaking, and wonder why they are not attractive! Even a beautiful voice used on one note or on only a few, will tire. The human brain will not endure peacefully the constant hammering at one kind of sound. The nerves rebel. One note speakers are failures! Therefore use your speaking voice as you would your singing voice, up and down the scale!

The range of voice is commonly divided into registers known as Upper, Middle and Lower. The Upper register is said to embrace the highest third, sometimes called the head register. The Middle register is the middle third or throat register, and the Lower register the lower third or chest register. These divisions may be mental ones but will serve to make you grasp their importance. Singers at least will follow me, and should easily put their knowledge into their speaking voice with great effect.

The low notes are most restful. The higher the pitch rises the more vibrations there are in a fraction of time. They occur at the vocal chords. The lower the voice

descends, the fewer are the vibrations, and therefore the more restful to the hearer, and a relief to the throat of the speaker.

Develop the natural tone of your voice in which you are accustomed to speak normally.

This will enable you to make your speech more musical, give you a range of pitch and expression, and avoid the strain on your vocal chords. The tendency, in nervousness, is to contract the muscles of the throat and develop a high pitched voice.

You have probably often noticed the nervous speaker with the high pitched, harsh and crackling voice? Cultivation of your deeper tones of voice, therefore, is necessary, and constantly remember:- a mental criticism of other faulty speakers will enable you to avoid their errors.

“Time” is the rapidity with which we give utterance to our words, clear articulation is the paramount necessity, and neither speed nor anything else must be allowed to interfere with it. Nervousness, here also plays its horrible part, because it usually tends to make the speaker hurry his “time” and articulation becomes jumbled. Something of the “time” will be indicated by the nature of the passage to be spoken; an impassioned appeal or a fiery denunciation demanding greater rapidity than a solemn exhortation, a gentle appeal, or a critical analysis of argument.

Proper phrasing and grouping of words is commonly known as “vocal punctuation”. This is done by arranging the words into groups, so as to convey their actual meaning, and in separating them by the use of pauses in utterance.

The pause can be used very effectively when you wish to impress upon the minds of your listeners some vital

or important word or phrase. Our minds, at times, are like the sensitive plate of a camera, and correct “exposure” can be compared with that correct “pause”. The word or phrase has time to sink in, and become impressed upon the mind and predominates above all phrases surrounding it, which may have been used just to further illuminate the important one.

Unnecessarily big words should not be used, particularly if you do not understand them, for you may hold yourself up to ridicule! Simplicity in speaking is a virtue always appreciated.

A MOST IMPORTANT POINT

The speaker must realise that unless his audience understands his speech, and follows his line of arguments, his efforts are just waste of time. **THEREFORE:** study the nature and mental capacity of your audience and model your speech accordingly. (A speaker in explaining the theory of “relativity” would not use the same expressions to an audience consisting of: (a) undergraduates; and (b) schoolboys. The language would be simpler and the logic clearer in the latter case.) (Likewise a good barrister would not waste time in putting “sob stuff” over a judge; but in addressing a jury he would constantly refer to the accused’s “poor old mother”).

It may often arise that a speaker has carefully prepared his speech and, after commencing, finds that his stuff is “not going over”. (Perhaps because his audience have been bored with a previous speech; or the dinner was not to their liking). It is necessary that the speaker should alter his style immediately. If you

were speaking in a serious vein, try a few jokes. If you were emotional; change to dry logic. The good speaker is the one who can forget himself and “get into the minds of his audience”.

In conclusion on “delivery” I would impress upon you the necessity of “throwing” your voice. It is quite possible for an elocutionist to throw a “whisper” to the far end of a theatre. Perfection in this art needs the aid of a teacher, but it will materially help if you concentrate on delivering your speech to hearers farthest from you. If you concentrate to that end, it will automatically follow that your words will clearly reach them without the need of excessive “bellowing”. Space will not allow enlarging on these few words of advice, but if my readers will only carefully study these remarks, and possess sufficient initiative to endeavour to rehearse on these lines, they definitely should become quite proficient Lodge speakers.



TOASTS

This class of speaking may be divided broadly into two classes:— “Proposing” the toast and “responding” to the toast.

It will immediately be seen that this cursory classification opens up somewhat different possibilities. The former may be entertaining and witty, or light in tone; or serious and full of praise; the main exception being the formal toast such as “The King” or the “Loyal Toast”, etc. It is difficult to imagine that anything new or original can be devised in the matter of these formal toasts, but much may be done by a happy knack of expression to give them freshness. Unless a member of the Royal Family is present, of course, there is no response to the toast of “The King”.

The toast of “Grand Lodge” however offers greater opportunities to the speaker, and care should be taken to direct the speech into such a channel as will give it a personal application to a representative or representatives present who may be called upon to reply. The proposer may refer to the achievements of Grand Lodge, or, briefly to its history, the place it occupies in the social system, to its method of administration, and, of course, especially mentioning the services of those members present at the function, thereby leading up to the response, and giving the whole speech that personal touch.

The Newly Decorated Brother or Guest of Honour

This speech will essentially be eulogistic referring firstly to the events which have directly led to the presentation of the special honour of decoration, and

secondly to the general career of the Brother thus distinguished. In all these cases the speech should be carefully considered and deliberately delivered, for while there is no reason why it should not be happily phrased, it is intended, above all else, to pay a tribute to the Brother being honoured, and not to entertain and amuse the Lodge. However always be careful that praise does not degenerate into hypocrisy and ridiculous flattery, which will be both absurd and displeasing to the subject of it. Sincerity is all that any recipient could possibly wish for. It is pleasing and wholesome.

Of course, speeches at sporting functions, weddings and such like are usually correct if delivered in a merry manner. Light heartedness is the order of the moment! Banquet speaking is usually handled by noted exponents, with less formality, and therefore they avoid being too serious. I previously suggested that often the error of speaking is by eliminating too much accumulation of knowledge, light hearted speeches are the exception. “Short, breezy, and bright”, is the motto for after dinner speaking. Dr. Lee in his book on “Principles of Public Speaking” says: (referring to the after dinner speech) “Whatever points it makes must glitter like steel and sparkle like the diamond. Wit is essential and pathos and fancy should have a place in the scheme. The after dinner speech of ten minutes, needs as careful preparation, as the expository address that is designed to occupy an hour in utterance. Nothing should be left to the inspiration of the moment, for the chances are that the banquet room will not have a peg on which to hang an idea”.

What has been said of speeches delivered in proposing these toasts applies, with the necessary modifications, to speeches delivered in response.

Be sure you have a clear conception of the difference between “proposing” and “responding”. Don’t get up and pat yourself on the back, as I have often heard the responder do!

In concluding, I must touch on one danger. It frequently happens that two or three speakers may be called upon to propose or respond to a given toast, and being second or third speaker you find some “Beastly” fellow has “pinched” your choicest ideas and even your happiest phrases. In such cases only your native wit and readiness can save you. Frank confession that you have been “robbed”, made in a humorous manner, often provides the solution and is usually well received, especially if you can colour it with some little anecdote or witty story suitable for the occasion. But please remember that your Lodge room is not the place to tell stories which should be reserved for the exclusive use of a low class smoke social.

Discard “washed out” stories which become boring through repetition, and collect clean, witty snappy ones, they are an invaluable possession. Do not drag them out, and you’ll find them well received. Good humour, tact and delicacy of feeling combined with simplicity, naturalness and sincerity, plus a reasonable knowledge of the art, and you must be an acceptable, if not an efficient speaker.



SUGGESTED PATTERN SPEECHES

GRAND LODGE

Worthy, etc., the toast I have the honour to propose is that of The Grand Lodge. For many years past noted members of our Order have devoted many of the best thoughts of their lives to the welfare of our workings. Some have gone before having left their good works behind which should act as an incentive to us to follow figuratively in their noble footsteps. There are noble ones working in Grand Lodge today and we would tell them whilst on this earth that we do admire them and appreciate their efforts. We know that wherever possible they will endeavour to keep up the high traditions and dignity of the governing body. Much of their own spare time is willingly given in the service of Grand Lodge and all are members and valued members of some Minor Lodge. Their presence amongst us tonight lends wonders to the success of this function, and we all sincerely hope that we will soon again have the honour and pleasure of seeing them in our Lodge room.

The only representatives able to get here tonight were “So and So”. “So and So” is well known throughout our Order as an ardent worker for his banner and so is “So and So”. We are fortunate indeed in having two such noted Members of Grand Lodge here and I will ask you all to be upstanding and drink to the health of Grand Lodge coupled with the names of “So and So” and “So and So” and trust that they will have enjoyed their visit amongst us sufficiently to allow us the honour and pleasure of expecting them again.

THE VISITORS

It has been a great pleasure to us to be able to receive tonight's visitors and we owe them this meed of thanks for the compliment they have paid us by their presence, and for the geniality and good feeling which they have contributed to make this occasion so happy. Many of them are old friends, and all the others, we hope, will yet become so. (Some graceful allusion should here be made to the more prominent ones, and read all their names from C. Registrar's book together with ranks and Lodges). We ask that they all will convey back to their respective Lodges the hearty fraternal greetings of this Lodge. Realising they probably had other pressing invitations, we feel proud indeed that they have this night honoured us in preference. We trust that the inconvenience of getting here has been rewarded by a pleasant evening and we wish to express our thanks in the good old Buffalo way!

RESPONSE TO VISITORS

Worthy, etc., and Brother "So and So" (proposer). You have entertained us royally, and you have lavished hospitality on us ever since our arrival, and just when we were wondering how to thank you, you take away our breath by thanking us. We shall be happy to deliver your message to our Lodge, and tell them how excellently you have entertained us. We thank you for the manner in which you honoured our Toast and for the hospitality of which this marks the close. If the criterion by which to tell a good host is that his guests enjoy themselves, you may claim to have graduated with honours in the school of hospitality. In the name of the

Visitors I wish to thank you very much and congratulate you upon the success of the function.

FAREWELL AND PRESENTATION

It is with a mixture of feeling, both sad and happy, that I rise to give you the toast of "Our Guest". Sad because we say farewell to a valued friend and Brother; happy because he is going away to better himself in life. On your behalf, as on my own, we wish him every success and happiness in his new sphere; we rejoice that he is going to a position where his energy and abilities will have fuller scope, even while we regret to lose him from among us. I am not going to sing his praises, that would be at once impertinent and unnecessary, I shall only say that during his stay here, our friend has endeared himself to us all by his never failing kindness, hospitality, and consideration, as well as by his cheerfulness, good fellowship and sympathy, qualities which will make him friends wherever he goes. Though he be no longer with us, I am sure that neither he nor we will soon forget our friendship, and intimacies. These things will be treasured memories to us all, and it is not in any fear that he will forget, that we ask him to accept as a parting gift from us this (?) in token of our great regard and esteem. If gifts are valuable according to the feelings of the givers, then this one, in itself trifling, will perhaps commend itself more to him than other more precious objects, solely because it is the gift of friends. Now, Brothers, I shall add no more than this, wherever he goes he takes with him our goodwill and our friendship; whenever he returns he will find us ready and happy to welcome him. I ask you to be upstanding and drink "Long Life, Good Luck and Prosperity to (?)".

REPLY TO ABOVE

Worthy, etc., Brother “So and So” (proposer). I have no words to express my thanks to you, not only for the kind things you have said about me, but also for this magnificent gift, which will always be among my most valued possessions. Opportunity has beckoned me, and I owe it to my family that I obeyed. Need I say how sad I am to leave so many good and true friends, how much it costs me to go from you to strangers, it is like leaving a part of myself behind. If my life here has been happy and it has, it is to you, to your friendship and your company that I owe so much. Be assured that I shall never forget you, and will always be hoping to meet you from time to time in the future. For your good wishes, too, I thank you from the bottom of my heart; in return will you accept mine? May you prosper and be happy as you deserve to do! - Again and again I thank you!

TO THE LADIES AT A LADIES' NIGHT

(By W.P.)

Ladies and Brethren, to arrange a pleasant evening for our Ladies requires quite a little preparation and thought but I can assure you that it gave less worry to my Executive than this moment has given to me! I would that this honour had been placed on more capable shoulders. We have asked you ladies to be present tonight to in some small way show you our gratitude for the sacrifices you make from time to time for our benefits. Some of you must at times wonder if the reason is sufficient, and wonder why we value our Lodge. Each of you are very dear to some good Buff., but a diamond

is cut with many sides, and so is your good Buff. You all must admit that even though your life is everything desirable at home, you still need the friendship and intimacy of some of your own sex. Not that they could in any way surpland your man, but simply that it makes you even happier at home because of your association with other lady friends. The same thing equally applies to your Buff. It is necessary to him also that he should associate with his fellows, that he should have their moral support and intimacy! It is inborn in man and woman and actually is, one of the laws of nature. Civilisation has fostered the finer side of man's character and no organisation of combined effort has done more to make our Members happy than our Lodges. We unite ourselves in the bonds of friendship and brotherly love, and seek to relieve ourselves from the cares and troubles of the outer world! Therefore are we not doing a direct benefit to your home? Naturally there are other sentiments and aims but we still profess to be able to send your man home to you the better for having attended his Lodge, and the better fitted to combat the trials of tomorrow's worldly troubles. We, of course, appreciate that it entails a loss to you of your man's company, but is it not worth the sacrifice? So, may I appeal to you all, for the ultimate good of your happiness, that you will encourage your Buffs to attend their Lodge, realising that he in turn will encourage you to associate with your lady friends. It now only remains for me, on behalf of our Lodge, to say how happy we are to have you amongst us, and to assure every lady present that we have one aim only in view, that of making you all enjoy this evening. The debt of gratitude we owe you is too big to ever fully repay, and words are inadequate to express our thanks. Brother Buffs I ask

you all to be upstanding and drink to the health and happiness of those so near and dear to us. God bless them, "Our Ladies".



CHAIRMANSHIP

There are nearly as many “tricks” in chairmanship as there are “wiles” in a woman’s courtship, and can be as forgivable in the one as the other, because in both cases they are the means to a “great good end”. In our Lodge meetings, the efficient handling of the chair is of vital importance, and regrettably many valuable members have been lost to our Order through the inability of the W.S.P. to throw “oil on the troubled waters”. To obtain maximum expediency with thoroughness of discussion, and to retain strict decorum without the loss of pleasure is the aim of all good chairmen. If the meeting is orderly it becomes easy to handle, providing the Chair is reasonably competent. Lodge members so pattern themselves by the Chair, that they respond according to the example set by him, and if he can acquire that happy medium between slovenliness, and boisterousness, which we will call briskness, he will find that he has created an atmosphere which will have a material effect on the proceedings of the meeting. Therefore the Chair should, when the Lodge is properly constituted, give the required knocks of the gavel in a briskness of manner which will encourage a similar briskness and alertness from the floor. Whenever speaking, be sure you speak “to” the members. Take command immediately! If you hang your head and mumble into a book or the rostrum, you will lose the attention of many. Set the example, be alert, hold up your head, and let all realise that you have your eye on them. Exhibit just that same “air” that you desire in response, only that your example must be outstanding. When you call for a motion which is purely formal, I would suggest you make it a semi command,

such as “I will now receive a motion that the Minutes and Cash Account be received, “NOT” will some Brother, etc.”? Later, in similar semi command state:- “Brethren will be upstanding and assist me to drink the Loyal Toast”! NOT “will the brethren, etc.”, and so on with all formal requirements.

In knocking the gavel for the “thirty seconds’ silence”, do so with knocks suggestive of the occasion, not too loudly, and very slowly; and in the following speech “The Brethren will now stand at the, etc.”. deliver it with a suitable dignity, slowly, clearly, and in your deepest voice. Then one clear knock and be seated.

Now comes a dangerous moment! “After the lull comes the storm”, is the old saying which can easily be the next tragedy! Don’t lose the attention of your meeting here. I maintain this is often the starting point of bad decorum. Immediately you are seated get in first in strong clear voice and get the next business on the move, otherwise it seems only natural that after the thirty seconds’ silence, the lull seems to break into a general storm of undertones, and your control is temporarily disorganised. So be sure you avoid this set back by again gathering up the reins of government before that hubbub starts, and you will probably have smooth running and decorum throughout, because you will have learned the lesson that “idleness breeds discontent” and, avoiding idleness and lulls between proceedings, combine decorum with pleasure and expediency.



RULES OF DEBATE

To combine maximum of expediency with thoroughness of discussion, you must see that the Rules of debate are strictly observed. Throughout, only one speaker may have the floor at a time; none may speak a second time on the subject (unless in explanation and with the permission of the Chair) except the mover of the motion, and in every case with a limit of fifteen minutes (unless special permission be given for extension). No speaker shall be interrupted, except on a point of order, when the Chair must decide, immediately, whether the point of order is upheld or not. (Upon his decision being given, a reprimand should be delicately administered to the speaker or the interjector whoever is wrong, and the speaker then is instructed to proceed).

No discussion may take place until a motion is seconded, except by the mover, (who is expected to expound his motion). If there is no seconder forthcoming when the Chair calls "Is there any seconder to this motion"? further discussion is disallowed, and the Chair announces "the motion lapses for want of a seconder"!

If a seconder is found, he may follow on by putting his arguments in favour, and the Chair, when he is finished, will say "Brethren the motion is now open for discussion. Is there any speaker against". I suggest the speaker against because if all are in favour where is the sense of wasting time convincing members already convinced? In such case "put the motion" as quickly as possible and gain expediency by closing the discussion.

If on the other hand, you find a speaker against, you must have the motion debated. During the discussion keep your attention directed to the point at issue and if

any speaker wanders from the point, or introduces personal or irrelevant matter, immediately call him to order and to the “subject” before the Chair and tell him not to lose sight of this subject in a cloud of abuse or verbiage. This will help you keep order, and stop any tendency to unparliamentary proceedings.

The final “right of reply” is the privilege of the mover of the motion, Before the Chair puts the motion he should ask the mover does he wish to exercise his right. If the mover accepts, all discussion other than his must then be closed and the vote taken.

On this point, be careful that a shrewd debater does not defeat the ends of justice by tricking you into closing the discussion prematurely! For instance, he may have reason to believe there will be one powerful speaker against him, and fearing that his case may be lost if that speaker secure the floor, conspires to trick the “opposition”. He would probably try to hustle you into granting him the final right of reply, and whether or no he achieves that consent he will have a third and further member of his “team” in readiness to move and second “that the motion be put”, meanwhile, each time claiming the floor by activity, ahead of this dreaded powerful speaker. If he can succeed this far, the Chair has no alternative but to take a vote as to “whether the motion now be put”. No one can object and no discussion can take place! Therefore, seeing the dreaded speaker has been safely held to his seat, the “ayes” have an excellent chance to win the day, because up to there the voters have been persuaded to lean towards the motion and may not realise the whole thing is “poison, covered with chocolate”. It is a weakness in the rules of debate. It cramps justice.

This shrewd move can only effectively be worked from the “ayes”, because nothing can cheat the mover of his right to reply, “before the motion be put”. I may here further enlarge by saying that neither the mover or seconder of the motion is allowed to move “that the motion be put”.

In conclusion on this “trick”, I think it is bad taste to resort to it, and at least every clear thinking and just member should view it with suspicion, and realise the truth in that valuable old adage “No one hurries you for your own good”. (Exceptions but prove the rule.) Therefore vote that the motion not be put, and have further discussion.

“Amendments” are usually akin to the motion but with modifications or additions! The Chair should be careful that it is not a direct negative to the motion before accepting it. Discussion may bring you on to notice of further amendments but the Chair can not have more than one motion and one amendment before it at once. If the first amendment be lost when put, another amendment may be substituted and so on, but if the motion be defeated, the amendment then becomes the motion and a further amendment can be brought, and again so on.

When all amendments have been exhausted, you still have a motion left. This may be discussed, and then put. This should show that the aim is, to play the amendment against a motion continually, make all speakers speak either to the amendment or to the motion. Don’t allow any one to speak against both amendment and motion.

The order of procedure is simple:- A motion - an amendment:- voted on, leaves one or the other still a motion. By discarding the loser, you make room for a

further amendment, and so on. Finally after a series of tests you arrive at the final choice of motion, and that one is treated just as a fresh motion, i.e., discussed for and against; then put it to the vote to see if it can exist. If it be lost you are back where you started, and a fresh motion may be brought providing it is not an exact duplication of something already defeated. The same procedure as before is then again applicable.

“A Notice of Motion” is necessary when there is a constitutional reason for giving notice of intention to move. Seeing that the subject is usually to rescind a previous decision of the brethren, or of some vital importance to all individual members, the wisdom of enforcing a stay of proceedings or a warning, is immediately apparent (see Rule Book).

“No Amendment to a Motion of which due notice has been given”. Obviously if a motion requires notice so would any amendment to it, as by several amendments, the whole tone of the original motion may be changed and one of them finally replace the motion. Therefore amendments may not be moved while the Notice of Motion is before the Chair for discussion. Discussion is therefore limited to “for” and “against”. When the Notice of Motion has been “lost” or “resolved” then the required alterations or additions may be tested by the usual channels of another “Notice of Motion”.

At the end of the discussion, the vote can be taken, in the usual manner, the Chair to decide whether the motion is lost or carried, but calling firstly for “those in favour” and counting, and likewise for “those against”, and afterwards clearly announcing his decision. He should then immediately give one brisk knock of the gavel to signify the matter is “closed”. Of course if the vote is by ballot (or “secret”) he shall appoint two

scrutineers, who will report the result to him and he will then announce the result together with the fall of the gavel.

The Chair rarely votes on a show of hands, but always in a secret ballot. He usually only has a casting vote in the first case, but claims both an ordinary vote and a casting vote in a secret ballot,

The “casting vote” is unnecessarily feared by many chairs. If practicable obey the “golden rule”, “Leave things unchanged” (Status quo). By doing this you can do no irreparable damage, and the matter is open to be tested again at a future date.

However, be sure you make your casting vote to material things. For instance, if at one meeting it was carried that “the furniture be burned”, and a notice of motion to rescind was put forward, that notice of motion holds the motion up from execution (known as *ultra vires*). Next meeting if it were left to the Chair to give the casting vote, on the notice of motion, he could possibly misinterpret the meaning of the golden rule. He might argue that the previous motion was to burn, and therefore to leave things as they were he would have to defeat the notice of motion and allow the old motion to stand. The golden rule says leave “things” unchanged not “motions” unchanged. Therefore save the furniture.

Speaking one way and voting the other is entirely in order. It sometimes happens that a motion is likely to lapse for want of a seconder and as it may be desirable for members to discuss the motion, a member may rise to second it “pro-forma”, although he may have no intention whatever of supporting it.

Carried unanimously is only strictly correct when all privileged to vote have recorded in favour. If any

refrain from voting at all, and all votes recorded are in favour, the correct term would be “carried, nobody objecting”. However it is only a technical point, and does not need much consideration.

Challenging the count is allowable in a “show of hands”. The Chair will again put the vote, and again declare the number “for” and the number “against”. If he be wise he will appoint scrutineers for the re-vote.

“Ballot” is essentially secret, the name receiving its origin from “ball”. Therefore “balloting” may be done by balls or by writing. In either case scrutineers must be appointed to “check” the Chair’s decision. This count may only be challenged by the Chair or scrutineers, except on a point of order.

Withdrawal of Motion or of Amendment. A motion may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the seconder, and with the agreement of the meeting; but if an amendment is before the meeting, the motion cannot be withdrawn until the amendment has been disposed of, either by the mover of it withdrawing (its seconder and then the meeting consenting), or by its being put to the vote as an amendment. It is often customary, however, to allow a motion to be withdrawn in favour of its amendment, providing the mover and seconder of the motion agree; in which case the amendment immediately usurps the position as the motion. This is technically wrong but sometimes excusable. If any member rise to a point of order the objection would have to be upheld.

The seconder of a motion (or amendment) may not have the privilege of asking permission to withdraw the motion (or amendment), nor can he be allowed to withdraw the seconding of it.

The resolution is a motion which has been carried in the usual way, and is, or is to be placed on record in the Minute Book. Unless by natural expiry, it may only be recalled for alteration or nullification, by notice of motion through the correct procedure.

The Minute Book is kept by the Secretary and is an official record of the proceedings of each meeting. Each page should be numbered and in the left hand margin “key words” of the resolution or narration written to enable quick back reference. Items should naturally be recorded in Lodge sequence, in a note book, and drafted into the Minute Book after the meeting. “Trial” motions or amendments which are defeated need not be recorded except in the “rough Minute Book” but of course, the final motion and result naturally must be recorded to comply with “Rule 18”.

The Secretary should endeavour to record all essential facts, but in a brief manner, as they are a “correct but short” account of the proceedings.

Resolutions must be entered in the exact wording of the mover; Minutes of narration should be brief and concise.

The Secretary should take a pride in his Minute Book, and a tactful Chair will compliment him at the meeting when the praise is deserved.

A Minute Book may not have any page mutilated. If necessary the word “cancelled” may be written across a condemned page, and the next page used. That word “cancelled” should then be initialled by the W.P. and the C. Secretary.

Erasions are emphatically not allowed. If before confirmation of Minutes the meeting rules that something as written by the C. Secretary is not a true record, the words found wrong may be neatly ruled

through and the correct wording inserted above them. Even this can only be done with the Chair having gained consent by a motion, and the C. Secretary and W.P. must initial the alteration. Of course the Minute Book should always be written up in ink (or typed) and finally signed, in ink: by the W.P. and dated.

Confirmation of Minutes is technically tricky as confirmation means ratification; so that if Minutes have to be confirmed, strictly, action on them cannot be allowed until their confirmation. It is desirable however that common sense should urge discretion. It is preferable that the mover and seconder of the motion “that they be confirmed”, be members who were present at the previous meeting, but still not absolutely necessary. On no account should the Chair permit any attempt to re-open the subject matter which the Minutes cover. Members are confirming their accuracy as a true record of all the previous meetings. When confirmed, the W.P. will attach his signature, in ink (if possible at the end of the Minutes) and the date of the signature. It matters not if he were not the W.P. at the previous Meeting.

Chairs of honour: rank (1) first on the W.P.’s right; (2) first on his left; (3) second on his right (4) second on his left and so on, Visitors are the responsibility of every Brother in the Lodge room. Each and every member of the home Lodge is host, so be sure that they realise that by the manner in which they are treated throughout the evening. The Chair is only your spokesman and director, and is only responsible in that way. The C. Chamberlain is your usher, and having a roving commission, is best able to introduce them to the brethren nearest their seats. All members must exhibit

every effort to meet them and prove their hospitality; see that they are first to get grazing, etc., and press them to more.

Newly Initiated Brethren are your guests on their initiation night. Extend the hand of welcome. Treat them with even more gentle care than a visitor, if possible. A warmth of reception will awaken a response, but a cold reception will assuredly drive them from you.

“Atmosphere” in a Lodge room is probably above all things necessary to its ultimate success. The word is really “coined”. Dignity, earnestness, sincerity, refinement, confidence and thoughtfulness all combine to make what is termed “atmosphere”. All meetings have it in various degrees, either of good or evil. If the above mentioned virtues reign in your Lodge Room it must be to a large degree of good. Atmosphere is the foundation on which to build decorum. “The appetite grows on what it feeds” is an old saying. Feed your Lodge with it and watch both your Lodge and your members improve.

Evening Dress is not essential in our Lodge, but nevertheless it is preferable. It will do a great deal towards creating an atmosphere, and lifting your Lodge in the eyes of the world. At least members should be courteous enough to wear their “best” suit, and I would suggest a little black bow instead of a tie; they cost very little but are still a mark of respect and good taste.



CONCLUSION

As a conclusion to these elementary fundamentals, I would suggest that they are theory, and must be seasoned by tact, personality and experience.

Knowledge must be acquired by study. As the finger post steadily points the way, so knowledge will guide the student through the world, and teach him “wisdom” as he goes!

May the little hints herein compiled help my readers on their way. May they “progress” and early find their wisdom; and may the two combined bring them prosperity and happiness, peace and harmony.



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