

to express unhesitatingly my views on the condition and prospects of this Rite in this Dominion.

From a careful survey and accurate examination made of the records of the subordinate councils in this jurisdiction, I cannot say there is much room for loud congratulations. A few of the councils are still active and prosperous, but I regret to say some are in a state of torpor which will require energetic action on the part of my successor to awake to renewed life and vigor. However, I have no fear for the future of the Rite in this Dominion, if but ordinary care be taken in the working of the degrees. Other orders of Masonry are taking all legitimate means to stimulate the membership to increased zeal in the ceremonies pertaining to the working of the various degrees. Appropriate paraphernalia, authorized rituals, accurate work, energetic and painstaking officers, are procured and sought after.

Let the most beautiful and the most necessary of all the higher degrees as an adjunct to Royal Arch Masonry pursue the same course. I trust our Councils will awake from their lethargy, organize, make proper returns at the proper time, and pay their dues punctually to this Grand Council. It requires some energy on the part of those Companions where our Councils are located, and who prefer to control them, to set the machinery in motion. The result will amply repay them.

The causes of this inactivity (without depreciating any of the higher orders of the great body of Masonry, especially those which are organized as legitimate offspring of the parent stock), truth compels me to state that I attribute want of progress in this Order to the divided interests in so many rites, which, instead of being a benefit, are in reality a burden to the membership. The older degrees, which for a time were interesting, became less so, when gorgeous furniture, handsome uniforms, high-sounding titles are so easily obtained.

But Cryptic Masonry, if properly understood and appreciated, in all that true Masonry consists of, is second to none. Its ritual has no peer in our language; its work, if studied, is perfection; and Royal Arch Masonry is not complete without the degrees we confer. A great cause of the declension of interest in the Cryptic Rite is the difficulty to procure a proper uniform ritual for the use of our Councils. Officers have looked upon this want as an insuperable difficulty. Their term of office expires without work having been done, because they are not in possession of the proper work. Another reason is that our Inspectors-General do not visit the Councils in their various jurisdictions, and do not urge the necessity of renewed activity. If the visiting of Councils was properly performed, many Councils which to-day are careless and indifferent would be vigorous and healthy.

ANOTHER CAUSE.

Many who take office in our Council are so burdened with office in other bodies that little time is left, and little attention given to Council work. It is not an unusual occurrence in some Councils for the Thrice Illustrious Master to be the W. M. of a Blue Lodge, the First Principal of a Chapter, and the Thrice Illustrious Master of a Council. This state of affairs will not properly conduce to the success of any of these bodies.

THE REMEDY.

The first remedy I would offer as a suggestion is the supplying of an authorized ritual to all Councils, so that the presiding officer may be in a position to train his officers properly, thus providing uniform work, that each officer may appear before his Council without fear or hesitancy. I would also suggest that Councils procure proper paraphernalia (which is not expensive) for the working of the degrees, making them at once attractive and instructive; also, that all Royal Arch Masons who are members of this Rite impress upon their Companions