

The Emperor's New Clothes

A Masonic Perspective

There can be little doubt that everyone reading this knows the story about the emperor's new clothes. The lesson in the story is that we are often afraid to say something for fear of being thought of as being ignorant or not fully aware of all the facts.

It would be interesting to know how many Freemasons are like the little boy in the story with regard to Masonic ritual and processes. In other words, they can see the things that are contributing to our "decline," as it were, but prefer to remain silent for fear of ridicule or "being put down."



Most of us (estimate about 80%) do not go to lodge. We still remain a member and pay our dues, but are inactive for many reasons. Furthermore, a large segment of our members has demitted or become suspended for non-payment of dues. Obviously they had a problem with something. Make no mistake, these members are still Freemasons.

One thing that has been questioned for many years is the memory work required by lodge officers. That which is needed for the opening and closing ceremonies is not excessive, and not beyond the capability of anyone. The degree work, however, is another story. Although memorization has its rewards, it could be that most members would rather not get involved with it—thus a problem getting officers, and low lodge attendance (fear of being asked to do something). I will mention here that degree examinations can be too much for some candidates, and although they struggle through, they seldom return to lodge.

Many senior Freemasons insist on keeping the status quo on memory work. Are they like the emperor in our story? Can they not see that their position has possibly become untenable? Then again, it could be other things causing our decline (fewer and fewer new members).

Perhaps a national confidential survey is needed. In this way all members can be the little boy in the story and tell us exactly what they see, or don't see.

Of course, we can simply carry on and pretend our emperor is resplendent in his new clothes, but very soon we are going to be jolted into reality.