

vision, if the Grand Lodge should concur in this recommendation, that in such case the Grand Exalted Ruler may, if in his judgment the circumstances in a particular case warrant, report the facts to the Grand Lodge, whereupon, a resolution adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Grand Lodge and certified by the Grand Secretary to the approving officer of the Board of Grand Trustees, shall serve the same purpose as a certificate from the Grand Exalted Ruler issued as above provided.

THE NATIONAL HOME.

Accompanied by the Grand Secretary and Brother Mills of the Board of Grand Trustees, your Grand Exalted Ruler visited the National Home in February.

Having embarked on this mission and being steadfast of purpose therein, the Home was reached after the requisite changes of cars had been made and the intervention of the hackman procured.

If the Order is of the impression that it is maintaining National Home in keeping with its dignity, wealth and prestige it should be undeceived.

Let it be understood at the outset that no criticism of the management is intended. It was very disappointing that two members of the Board of Grand Trustees, specially charged with the duty of looking after the business affairs of the Hom

coupled with the necessity of the Home, made it impossible for your Grand Exalted Ruler to pay a second visit, consequently he was compelled to abandon the purpose of making a careful inspection of the business methods employed. The buildings and surroundings were neat and clean, inviting the most rigid inspection, and this notwithstanding the fact that the visit of the Grand Lodge officers had not been heralded in advance and was a surprise to the superintendent and matron. The monthly inspection of accounts and a year's observation generally of the manner in which the institution is conducted, induces the opinion that good business methods obtain. It is doubtful if better results reasonably may be expected so long as the Home is maintained at its present location. The per capita cost is high, as compared with other institutions, but this is due to two causes; *first*, the small number residing at the Home makes the over-head expense very heavy on the per capita basis; *second*, no institution provides for its occupants so bountifully.

Believing that the institution falls far short of being what the Elks National Home should be, and also far short of what the fraternity generally accepts it as being, the following is submitted out of a sense of duty and at the risk of offending some brothers who possibly may hold different views. No criticism is intended on those loyal and enthusiastic brothers to whom the Order is indebted for the National Home idea and for the crystallization of this sentiment into the institution located at Bedford, Virginia. At that time the institution responding to a thrilling and ennobling sentiment, but in locating the Home it acted on an impulse which, while thrilling the heart, failed to reckon with cold business developments which it

possibility. It has served its purpose, however, by pointing the way to splendid structures, which mark the development of a thriving and energetic people. Such is the highly useful mission which the first Elks National Home is destined to fulfill. Profiting by the lessons of the past, let us, therefore, look squarely into the face of actual conditions and plan for the future that it may not find us unprepared.

Bedford is a small town, lacking the requisite population, under our laws, for the institution of a lodge. Its sidewalks and public improvements do not entitle it to favorable mention even among villages of its size and class. It is situated on a branch line of railway. Even with the added importance given to it by the Elks National Home, it does not command sufficient respect to challenge any greater recognition from the few first-class trains passing that way than is accorded the ordinary grade crossing. There are no street cars in the town, and the prospects are not encouraging for this generation at least.

The Home occupies a knoll some little distance from the town, which may be thought by some to be in and of itself no great disadvantage. It is located about one mile from the railroad station, is accessible by carriage when the roads are passable, and when they are not, those strong of limb and resolute of purpose may rest in its halls after a fatiguing journey. Its surroundings are neither picturesque nor inspiring. The Peaks of Otter smile upon it, but the incentive for the smile may well be a matter of conjecture. Whatever attractions the location may hold are securely held and successfully secreted from the casual observer.

The building was erected in anticipation of a boom, which, like many another, budded, but never bloomed nor bore fruit. It was designed as a hotel and doubtless would have fulfilled its mission as such had its location been accessible and its

Lodges own and occupy the most highly attractive yet the structure itself constitutes in a general way may be said to be the Home. The furnishings in a general way may be said to be good enough, but they certainly are nothing to be proud of, excepting some handsome pieces and sets donated by individual brothers and by Subordinate Lodges.

No entertainment is provided for the brothers residing at the Home, and none could be provided except at great cost. They are dissatisfied, not because they are improperly housed or inadequately clothed and fed, but because they are isolated. It is not an answer to say that they are old, childish and crabbed, nor yet to say that the inmates of such institutions are never satisfied no matter what may be provided for them. In the first place they are not "inmates," as this term is usually employed. They are our brothers residing in an institution provided by the generosity of the fraternity for their enjoyment in declining years. They may, at times, be crabbed and hard to please, but it is doubtful if any member of the Order would be willing to say, after visiting the Home, that their complaints are, in the main at least, not well founded. They are isolated, almost to the point of exile, from the fraternity, for in the language of Caesar as applied to the Home, "the merchants come and go less frequently," and the brothers come and go not at all. They have no opportunity to go anywhere except to Bedford; no opportunity to enjoy a smile except those vouchsafed by the Peaks of Otter, and no opportunity to see anything except the clay dunes which characterize that part of Virginia.

It is generally not difficult to find fault, but a very different proposition to suggest the remedy. In this instance, however, To say that the National Fraternity should suggest as the

boast is vain that the Order is composed of men of a high order of intelligence and business sagacity and forethought. Obviously the only thing to do is to abandon the present institution and erect or acquire another properly located. This statement may reverse the logical and best order of procedure, although it is open to some question. In the opinion of your Grand Exalted Ruler, this matter is of supreme importance, and this session of the Grand Lodge should not be closed until a plan of procedure has been agreed upon and put into active operation.

Why would it not be well to make this session of the Grand Lodge ever memorable by creating the Elks National Home Building Fund? A per capita tax of five cents levied for this fund, on the basis of our present membership, would produce annually approximately \$15,250. This sum invested at five per cent. interest and compounded annually, adding annually the sum realized from the per capita tax, would amount approximately to \$104,000 in five years; \$146,000 in seven years; \$168,000 in eight years; \$192,000 in nine years; and \$216,000 in ten years. If it should, after mature deliberation, be thought wise to dispose of the present Home and its furnishings (except the furnishings donated), the sum realized from this sale could be passed to the credit of this fund. Even if a sum no greater than \$10,000 could be realized from this sale, the figures above quoted would be increased approximately as follows: \$116,000 in five years; \$160,000 in seven years; \$173,000 in eight years; \$207,000 in nine years; and \$233,000 in ten years. At the same time the proportion of the per capita tax, now used for the maintenance of the Home, could be applied toward providing suitable homes for the brothers at present residing in the institution, and any others who may be entitled to the benefits thereof. If this expendi-

of their respective lodges, their wants could temporarily be provided for without any increased expense, and probably an actual saving. At the same time they would be adding friends and much better contented than they are at the present institution. It may be considered unwise to sell the property at Bedford until the new institution is ready for occupancy, but, if it should be decided to conduct the present institution and at the same time proceed to erect or acquire a new Home, it certainly would be unwise to purchase any more land at Bedford, and also unwise to expend more money on the present buildings and grounds than is absolutely necessary to keep them in reasonable repair.

It may be considered that ten years is too long to wait, or that \$200,000 is more than is necessary. If so, construction may be begun on a less sum, or the time may be shortened by increasing the per capita tax. In the foregoing calculations no account has been taken of the normal increase in membership which may reasonably be expected.

The opinion is entertained by many that the Order should maintain a sanatorium in connection with the National Home. This matter is deserving of careful consideration, especially so if it should be decided to erect a new institution, especially so and of so planning the Order should build in the first instance, may not be marred by additions, from time to time, as they might, in after years, become necessary, are matters to be considered in committee meeting after careful investigation and are not proper subjects for discussion in a report of this nature.

This matter is respectfully submitted to the Grand Lodge with the recommendation that it be referred to the Grand Lodge session, together with such other matters as may be referred to the

ORPHANAGES.

There has been some discussion as to the advisability of the Grand Lodge at this time establishing one or more orphanages, thus providing for the care and education of minor children of deceased Elks. Your Grand Exalted Ruler has been requested to embody this topic in this report, together with a favorable recommendation. This is a subject which should receive careful consideration before committing the Order to a proposition of such magnitude. It is submitted to the Grand Lodge without recommendation, further than that it be referred to a committee of three to investigate and report back to the Grand Lodge at this session, together with such recommendations in the premises as may be deemed advisable.

OFFICIAL VISITS TO SUBORDINATE LODGES.

As much time as could be spared from the office was devoted to visiting Subordinate Lodges. The Grand Secretary was invited to accompany the Grand Exalted Ruler on many of these journeys and he accepted from time to time as the business affairs of his office would permit. While these visits are necessarily made at great inconvenience and sacrifice of time, their stimulating influence on Subordinate Lodges is abundant compensation. The officers of the Grand Lodge are thus placed in close contact with the officers and members of Subordinate Lodges, conditions are better understood and appreciated, and a bond of sympathy established between the Grand Lodge and Subordinate Lodges which could not possibly be brought about in any other way. The resulting benefits are mutual, the officers of the Grand Lodge gaining inspiration and Subordinate Lodges being stimulated to greater activity. The royal receptions which everywhere await the com-