

**P. M. ROSS**  
5 Elizabeth Park, Christ Church  
Barbados

telephone: (246) 429-3903 fax: (246) 426-8830  
email: [peterross@caribsurf.com](mailto:peterross@caribsurf.com)

### **PROPOSED GRAND LODGE FOR THE REGION**

-  
-  
At the request of the Wor. Master of Victoria Lodge, I presented Paper # 1 at the December, 2007 meeting of the Members. Three other Brethren also presented Papers.

I stand by everything which I wrote so many months ago. Indeed, my observation that the then prevailing rental rate of \$ 200 per meeting for use of the Temple would soon reach \$ 400 seems to be spot on, as it has already reached \$350. Also, my remarks that Lodges would soon be required to increase their subscription rates is already happening. It only remains for my observation that Masonry shall soon be a rich man's Club to be realized.

After studying the various Reports recently circulated, the opportunity arises for a thorough analysis of such Reports. My comments constitute Paper # 2 and, together with Paper # 1 will now be circulated for perusal by all Members of The English District. I trust that caution will be exercised as we consider the haste with which this matter is being thrust upon us.

I am hesitant to comment unfavorably on any Paper submitted by several experienced Masons, detailing their views. Time spent, research, formulation of ideas, etc. all constitute considerable effort which should be applauded.

However, when the issue involves a decision which will be made by over a thousand Masons, scattered throughout the Eastern Caribbean, it is my duty, as a senior Mason, to delve deeply into the contents and to give younger Masons the benefit of a divergence of opinions and of over 40 years of Masonic experience, not only in Barbados, but scattered throughout the Caribbean.

### **THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT GRAND MASTER**

I am quite certain that our Right Worshipful District Grand Master, cognizant of the Patent of his appointment, wishes to so conduct his duties that, when the time comes for his retirement, the remembrance of his term as District Grand Master will be recalled by him with the approval of a good conscience.

However, many Masons have reservations about the manner in which Rule 186 is being interpreted. I do believe that Rule 186 was drafted with an extraordinary abundance of caution, and that the District Grand Master should limit his involvement so that, in gardening terms, he decides to tiptoe carefully through the tulips.

Our young Members have the ability to make decisions about the future. Let them proceed without being encumbered in any way by even the well meaning prods of the District Board.

### **NOT ONE BUT THREE STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Several meetings have been held with senior Officials of the Scottish Constitution, yet we are told that the Reports submitted to us represent the formation of a Grand Lodge based on the precepts and tenets of English Freemasonry. In other words, we have not been given a comprehensive Report encompassing both present Districts. Not a complete waste of our time, but how can we agree or even consider this matter when we know only of one District's presentation.

Far better to have treated the present position as STAGE 1, for information only. Later, STAGE 2, with joint information and finally, STAGE 3, when we are well and truly ready for a FULL Caribbean Grand Lodge, including Masons from Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago..

Why the rush? You young Masons should exercise caution at present, and should defer consideration until you have comprehensive information such as would bind us together for centuries to come.

**SAY NO TO AD HOC OR INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS.**

## **SUNDRY COMMENTS**

It is noted that 27 Lodges would form the proposed Grand Lodge, of which 19 Lodges are English and 8 Lodges are Scottish.

I am very concerned that the functions of the Secretary and Registrar are combined. A Secretary rightly commits and dedicates his loyalty to his superior, whether a District Grand Master or a Worshipful Master. A Registrar is usually a prominent Attorney-at-Law, whose professional training requires impartiality in approach. Throughout the life of the proposed Grand Lodge, and more particularly in the growing stages, sound legal advice will be required. There should be a Secretary and a Registrar.

## **FINANCE**

I am quite certain that, armed with more information and time, we would be given a more comprehensive presentation of financial data. The Statement of Revenue and Expenses raises so many questions:

1. No proper explanation is given why the Membership Subscriptions are calculated at BDS\$138 per Member, up from the annual basis of BDS\$37.

2. Salaries should have been calculated for an Assistant Secretary (full time), a clerk/ receptionist (full time), a part time salaried Clerk, and a Maintenance "team", reference page 15 of 18. All for \$50,000! This is not the 1980s. If you pay peanuts, you know what you get! If the Assistant Secretary is a retired Mason, he must take into consideration the higher tax bracket in which his Salary places him. Additionally, a retired person takes health expenses into consideration, and dreams of living out his remaining years in quiet reflection and solitude.

3. There is an amount of \$23,000 allocated for Travel. Justifiable, but we deserve a comment.

4. Masons should be concerned that a Special Levy is likely to be charged

For the Capital component of the Establishment charges. There is

no estimate and we are left to worry whether a blank cheque would be required.

Once again, the financials are prepared on the basis of English membership only. If we are entering into a relationship with our Scottish brethren, why not produce a more comprehensive presentation of financial data? In these circumstances, we require "What if" details, to cover under or over statement of Revenue and Expenses.

## **WE REALLY DO NEED MORE FINANCIAL PLANNING.**

### WOR. BRO. ABEL'S REPORT

First, let us be thankful for small mercies – the Report of 21 pages represents a "Condensed Report".

I acknowledge that the research which he has conducted is very interesting as it relates to the history of West Indian Freemasonry.

Bro. Abel acknowledges that it is to be preferred that Guyana and Trinidad should join, but wishes us to go ahead and they can follow later. This is the worst concept of his Report. Indeed, I scarce can take it in! When Guyana and Trinidad wish to join, they will bring many excellent, qualified Masons from their many Lodges. It would be thoroughly embarrassing to accommodate them properly. "From the lateness of your application the principle offices have already been filled". We must avoid this eventuality. Let us take time to talk with them. Make necessary concessions. Seriously consider the future - a Grand Lodge of the Caribbean, without Trinidad? Surely, a misnomer. Will we then have two, possibly three Grand Lodges in the area?

Brethren, much work has been undertaken, but throughout their deliberations, the relevant Committee, although knowing about the reservations from senior Masons, have not taken it upon themselves to meet with those Masons and to try to take cognizance of their comments. Those Masons include a former Deputy District Grand Master, a former President of The District Board of General Purposes, a President of the District Board of Benevolence – surely a font of Masonic wisdom and experience. Is this the treatment which will continue among our leaders?

Finally, Brethren, I am very aware that many of you look favourably on the proposed Formation. I appreciate your feelings, but I merely request that you think extra carefully about the problems which could occur. It is far better for us to work for the perfection which is available, than to enter a

new area and subsequently regret our haste.

NOT TO SULLY OUR REPUTATIONS, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE NOW MARK TIME, SLOW MARCH AND MAYBE EVEN HALT FOR A SHORT WHILE, IN ORDER TO LATER QUICK MARCH WITH FULL CONFIDENCE.

Submitted by:

PETER M. ROSS