



Nugget

Fit and proper person

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A discussion of the term, 'fit and proper'.

Summary

A discussion of the term, 'fit and proper' situated in both Operative and Speculative Masonry.

Keywords

Fit, Proper, Senses, Operative, Speculative

A fit and proper person

Once the Candidate has confirmed his trust in God, he is paraded around the room, to show to all present that he is the candidate, properly prepared and a fit and proper person to be made a Mason.

First, let us consider what makes him 'proper'? The dictionary includes the following meanings: '*of good character or standing; respectable, worthy; and such as a thing of the kind should be; excellent, admirable, of high quality*'. This has hopefully been determined through the process of his approval as a candidate for freemasonry.

The requirement to be 'fit' originates in operative masonry. A mason had to have full use of, and strength, in his body. In speculative masonry the fitness required is of his mind; he must be able to comprehend the peculiar system of morality that is Freemasonry. He has to demonstrate that he can speak, which is achieved by asking him to respond to questions. The fitness of body is demonstrated as he is led around the room, blindfolded. But it goes further; there used to be tests of his five senses. In other words, he must demonstrate that he can see, feel, hear, taste and smell. For example, although it has ceased to be used in English Freemasonry, the test of the sense of smell was achieved by the use of incense. We still have the test for feeling; the point of a sharp instrument presented to his naked left-breast.

As is often the case, a simple phrase has an interesting history attached to it, but it should be considered by a proposer or seconder of a candidate for our mysteries and privileges and by the committee which examines him. As speculative masons we are looking for someone who is fit of mind, and able to appreciate the secrets and mysteries into which we are about to initiate him.

Just in case of impersonation, he is taken around the room, so that all present could see him to be sure that he is THE candidate.

One way or another, our operative forebears liked to be sure, because the privileges of the craft were valuable and not to be diluted by having inappropriate men brought into the craft.

As speculative Masons we also need to be sure the Candidate is fit and proper; but in a different sense.

##END##

Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

- Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; *though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.*
- Themed with the meeting or activity.
- Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.
- Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.
- Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

For further nuggets and other learning materials visit 'Solomon' at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

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