

WB E. L. Gonzales, PM (1)

Worshipful Master; the Charity Committee has no new case to report at this Stated Meeting. With your permission, however, I would like to summarize tonight — for the information of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the members of his party and other visiting brethren — the activities and accomplishments of the Charity Committee from 1961 up to the present time. But first, permit me to give a brief background on our Charity Committee.

Article XII of our by-laws provides that the master and wardens shall be a charity committee and shall have the power to draw upon the treasurer any sum, not exceeding 40 pesos, at any one time, for the relief of a distressed worthy brother, his wife, widow or orphans. This provision has remained in our by-laws since 1901 when the lodge was established.

In 1961, however, the lodge made a second sober look at Article XII and found that while its scope and purpose have remained praiseworthy to this day, the lodge has done little by way of assistance to handicapped children.

And so, in the Stated Meeting of March 1961, the lodge, in the exercise of its general powers, voted to expand the Charity Committee. Without directly amending the provisions of Article XII, the lodge simply agreed to enlarge the membership of the committee and to broaden its sphere of activity. Membership was no longer limited to the master and wardens but may be selected from the rank and file of the entire membership, at the discretion of the Worshipful Master.

An adequate but separate Charity

Fund was created and a current account opened with the First National City Bank. In creating a separate Charity Fund, the purpose was to provide, but not limited to, plastic surgery relief to deserving children. This laudable project was funded by approval of the members of the lodge on the basis of 4,000 pesos per year, unless circumstances dictated a change. This, in essence, is the background of the present Charity Committee, which is really a continuation of that created in 1961.

What has the Charity Committee achieved during the intervening years?

Succinctly stated, the records show that from 1961 up to this time, the Charity Committee has successfully concluded 80 charity cases which involved 37 boys and 43 girls.

For all these cases, the Committee spent a total of P8,592.20 which covered the period of six years and ten months. The average expense, therefore, ran to a little less than 1200 pesos per year. This average is indeed far below 4,000 pesos originally contemplated and appropriated for the project each year.

The expense per charity case averaged about 110 pesos. You perhaps wonder why the average expense per case is ridiculously low. The explanation is that — except for the first three plastic surgery cases handled in 1961 — the Committee spent only for medical and surgical supplies. The hospitals in the majority of cases did not charge for room and board of the patients as they were kept and maintained in free wards. The surgeons who participated in the project

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cooperated generously. They cheerfully donated their skill and service.

The afflictions or ailments of these 80 boys and girls are grouped into these categories: 73 had harelip and cleft palates; 4 had ailments involving the eyes; 1 required surgery in the neck; 1 suffered from severe burns of the body, arms and legs, face and neck; and 1 had a hole in voice box which was remedied by surgery.

The predominance of harelip and cleft palate cases was due to the fact that in 1963 the Charity Committee confined and limited assistance to this type of deformity.

The Charity Committee had also occasion to participate now and then in small but significant charitable work. In December 1961, for instance, the Charity Committee spread Christmas cheer to its beneficiaries by giving to each one of them a case of evaporated milk, coloring pencils, water colors, candies and local sweets and other food typical of the Christmas season.

In July 1964 after typhoon Dading wrought widespread destruction in the country, the Charity Committee immediately donated 200 pesos to the typhoon victims. The donation was made through the Salvation Army as this organization had first hand information of the individual needy families. I would like to mention that most of the harelip and cleft palate cases handled by the Charity Committee today were referred by the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army looks for the cases and we pay the bills after treatment. This arrangement was made in the second half of 1962 because it was recognized that the Salvation Army is in close contact with the grass roots section of the country and it had more opportunity, in the course of its crusade to see and

meet children with congenital deformity of this nature.

I would like also to add, for the record, that when the Charity Committee was started in 1961 it had established contacts with Miss Virginia Hebbert, Director, Medical Social Service of St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City and also with Mrs. Muriel Jay, wife of a Shell Company official. Mrs. Jay had a project for handicapped children and before she left the Philippines she made arrangements with the Charity Committee and the Salvation Army to work together on the project.

And here is another work which we are proud to recall. In November 1967 the lodge appropriated 1500 pesos from the Sack of Fraternal Assistance and immediately authorized the Charity Committee to disburse the whole amount for the relief of a distressed worthy brother whose employment in the country was abruptly terminated. He had to return to the United States with his family, unable as he was to get other jobs in the country. He had transportation tickets reluctantly provided by his employer (this brother was originally hired here in the Philippines, not in the United States) but he had no funds to take care of small local bills. He needed also a little pocket money to cover incidental expenses of his children while en route to his mid-western state. The response of the lodge members in this particular situation was swift and unanimous to the last man. The distressed worthy brother got the 1500 pesos which was really small in terms of dollars and cents but he was deeply grateful for the fraternal financial assistance.

In December last year — I was the master at the time — the lodge authorized the Charity Committee to spend not more than 500 pesos for candies

and other small Christmas items for the underprivileged children in the various wards of Manila hospitals. For this purpose, Wor. Bro. Johnson was appointed to buy the candies and distribute the same, with the assistance of Bro. Virgilio Balagot and Bro. Alfredo R. Embrador who were then members of the Charity Committee. Wor. Bro. Johnson got the candies and the distribution was made. But up to this time, Wor. Bro. Johnson has never asked for a reimbursement of the expenses he incurred. I never knew the reason why.

But when I was preparing the notes for this report, I found out that Wor. Bro. Johnson was the master in 1961. It was he who advocated strongly for a more expanded activities of the Charity Committee. The record shows that he implemented with vigor and enthusiasm the activities of the Charity Committee. At the time I appointed him to buy the candies and to distribute the same, it escaped my attention that he owns the Chocolate

House, a manufacturer of candies and pastries. I hope I did not, by such appointment, unfairly extort from Wor. Bro. Johnson a generous donation of candies for the underprivileged children.

Last Easter the lodge authorized the Charity Committee to provide Easter eggs, candies, jelly beans and chewing gum to about 400 boys and girls at the Children's Garden in Taytay, Rizal. The amount of 500 pesos was earmarked for this project. After procuring all the items needed and after placing them in dainty baskets, complete with excelsior, the Charity Committee had spent only about 360 pesos. This small project made 400 boys and girls happy and for the first time in their lives, enjoyed a truly good Easter. Based on the success of this first Easter project, it seems that the present thinking of the lodge members is to make the Easter eggs project an annual affair of the lodge.

Worshipful Master, this concludes this special report. △

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DISTRICT NO. 6 — NUEVA ECIIJA

Cabanatuan 53	Cabanatuan City	— 1st Saturday
Nueva Ecija 73	Quezon, N. Ecija	— 2nd Saturday
Memorial 90	Muñoz, N. Ecija	— 2nd Saturday
Gen. Manuel Tinio 167	Guimba, N. Ecija	— 1st Saturday
Gen. Llanera Mem. 168	Gapan, N. Ecija	— 4th Saturday
Narra 171	San Jose, N. Ecija	— 1st Saturday

DISTRICT NO. 7 — BULACAN-PAMPANGA-TARLAC

Malolos 46	Malolos, Bulacan	— 2nd Saturday
Pampanga 48	San Fernando, Pampanga	— 2nd Saturday
Isagani 96	Tarlac, Tarlac	— 1st Saturday
Leonard Wood 105	Clark Air Force Base	— 1st Tuesday
Victory 116	Camiling, Tarlac	— 3rd Saturday
Anchor 159	Paniqui, Tarlac	— 2nd Saturday

DISTRICT NO. 8 — BATAAN-ZAMBALES

Lincoln 34	Olongapo City	— 1st Wednesday
Pinatubo 62	San Narciso, Zambales	— 2nd Saturday
Zambales 103	Iba, Zambales	— 1st Saturday
Bataan 104	Lamao, Limay, Bataan	— 3rd Saturday

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