

From these admitted principles the conclusion is attempted to be drawn that upon the formation of a Grand Lodge in any theretofore unoccupied territory, all lodges within the geographical limits of such territory must perforce surrender their charters, and acknowledge allegiance to such newly organized Grand Lodge. To such a conclusion we cannot give our assent. A charter is granted to a lodge in perpetuity. It can be deprived thereof only for cause, which is always understood to mean malfeasance. So long as a constitutional number resist it, a charter cannot be surrendered. There is no power anywhere in Masonry,—unless it be despotic, and such would not be masonic,—to compel a lodge, guilty of no violation of the provisions of its charter or of masonic law, to surrender its charter or change its allegiance; and we believe the action of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, in sustaining her subordinates, is strictly legal and proper.

Since the organization of the Grand Lodge of Dakota, the Grand Lodge of Minnesota has declined to charter any new lodges within that territory. Minnesota fully and emphatically endorses and agrees with the doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction. She only dissents from some of the conclusions attempted to be drawn therefrom. The Grand Lodge of Kansas took precisely the same position with regard to a lodge chartered by her in the Indian Territory. The Grand Lodge of Missouri did likewise in relation to New Mexico.

It seems to your committee that when this question is properly presented and once understood, there can be no difference in opinion among American Freemasons, or in the application of the law to our whole country as a rule for the determination of the official rights of the several Grand Lodges. Assertion is not argument, nor will denunciation convince. It seems to your committee that when the Grand Lodge of Minnesota recommended her subordinates at Bismark and Fargo to transfer their allegiance to the Grand Lodge of Dakota, and declined to organize new lodges within that territory, she did all that masonic law could require or courtesy suggest.

DAKOTA.—We find about twenty pages devoted to this question, from which we make the following extract :

Let us come, then, to the general doctrine—the real question involved. Herein Masonry rules only by good precedent, custom and usage, as determined by the most ancient, learned and honorable authority.

The Minnesota doctrine is that it requires the voluntary consent and adherence of every existent lodge to give the Grand Lodge exclusive jurisdiction within the political limits; and that lodges within Dakota, created by Minnesota, while they so wish, can not only be maintained by Minnesota, but have, retain and hold their proper territorial jurisdiction, within which Dakota can organize no lodges. That is the claim clearly and briefly told. In other words, logically, the new Grand Lodge when constituted derives its territorial jurisdiction from the lodges which form it, and gets no more, except as by adding lodges that were in existence when it was constituted. It acquires from them their original territorial claim. If there were but four lodges one might hold over half the territory, and the other three forming a Grand Lodge would be excluded from the original territory of the fourth during its pleasure! It does not seem that this principle, as claimed, depends on whether all four lodges were chartered by the same Grand

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