

open and above board, and the man who allows his own personal feelings to drown his Masonic judgment, is unfit to be a Hiramite. He has not learnt the very alphabet of the Order.

The Worshipful Master of a Lodge should particularly impress upon the neophyte, in fact upon every member of his Lodge, the sacred character of the ceremony of balloting. In some Lodges the box is deposited on the altar, and "as the name of each officer and member is called by the Secretary, he approaches the altar, and, having made the proper Masonic salutation, deposits his ballot and retires to his seat. The roll should be called slowly, so that at no time should there be more than one person present at the box, for the great object of the ballot being secrecy, no brother should be permitted so near the member voting as to distinguish the color of the ball he deposits." This system of voting is far better than the general one of "passing the ballot-box" adopted in the generality of Lodges. Every brother is bound to vote on the application of a candidate for either initiation or affiliation, and if he is not personally acquainted with the applicant, he must accept the report of the investigating committee.

Now, in the vast majority of Grand Lodge jurisdictions, the ballot must be unanimous—one black ball excludes. Some Lodges in Ontario permit two, and England and Scotland permit three. The majority of Lodges, however, in Canada prefer unanimity. This is right, for certainly every member of a Lodge has the right to object to the acceptance of material that would be objectionable to him. Better keep out two good men than offend a brother; better exclude one hundred good men than accept one worthless ashlar. What a solemn and sacred duty, therefore, is imposed upon every brother when he casts his ballot. In the words of the learned Mackay: "Balloting for membership for initiation or affiliation is subject to the

same rules. In both cases 'previous notice one month before' must be given to the Lodge, due enquiry into the reputation and capacity of the candidate must be made, and 'the unanimous consent of all the members then present' must be obtained. Nor can this unanimity be dispensed with in one case any more than it can in the other. It is the inherent privilege of every Lodge to judge of the qualification for its own members, nor is this inherent privilege subject to a dispensation." Bro. Mackay is in error with regard to "previous notice of one month," for although such is the law under the Grand Lodges of Canada (Ontario) and Quebec, it is not so in New York, Ohio, etc., where Lodges meet more frequently than once a month. For example, a petition may be received in New York on January 2nd, and if that Lodge meet every week the ballot can be taken at the following meeting on January 9th. Again, as before pointed out, "unanimity" is not demanded in all Grand Lodge jurisdictions.

The importance, therefore, of using the ballot with due caution cannot be too frequently alluded to. By casting a black-ball against a worthy candidate a good man is kept out and an honorable brother or brethren at times offended. It is the duty of every brother to investigate the character of all material presented, and if he find a flaw in the same to reject it. We do not want numbers—we require good and true men. Negative qualifications are useless. Positive ones are those we demand. Every Lodge can secure such, if it works with harmony and dignity, and not only teaches but practices the fundamental principles of the fraternity. Since, therefore, the ballot is in this respect the great safety guard of our institution, let us always exercise it for the welfare and honor of Freemasonry.

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