

may be mentioned that the legislation of every Grand Lodge must be *prospective* and not *retrospective* in its action; while certainly that resolution is retrospective; and another; that Grand Lodge cannot permanently alter or repeal any of its by-laws or regulations except in the mode which it has itself provided; for it is a maxim in law that the same means are necessary to dissolve as to create an obligation; that since the rules and regulations of Grand Lodge require notice of repeals, amendments or new laws and that after such notice being given a motion can only become law by being supported by two-thirds of the votes present, it is not competent for Grand Lodge to make an amendment, repeal or add new laws by merely a majority of votes.

That our brethren at former meetings of Grand Lodge fully appreciated the soundness of those restraints upon Grand Lodge was amply manifested when that same subject of dual members' was brought under consideration. The draft of the Constitution read 11 October 1855 was adopted as the first constitution of this Grand Lodge and on the 10th July 1856 the constitution submitted by the Committee and as amended by Grand Lodge was unanimously conferred and adopted. In that constitution we find under the caption "Private Lodges" Section 22, "No brother can be a member of more than one lodge at the same time; but this law is not to take effect until after the annual communication of Grand Lodge in 1857." So careful were our brethren who formed this Grand Lodge, that they exercised the greatest precaution not to enact precipitate laws.

Then we find that during that same session notice of motion was given by R. W. Bro. Lundy, that he would at the next meeting move, seconded by R. W. Bro. G. L. Allen, that so much of the Constitution of this Grand Lodge, as restricts a brother from being a member of more than one Lodge be repealed; and that when in July 1857 that motion was brought up it was adopted, since which time dual membership has been allowed. When by a resolution of Grand Lodge July 1859 the Grand Secretary was instructed to have a new edition of the Book of Constitution printed with all necessary corrections and alterations, that 22d section was of course left out, and so it was left out, at the final revision of the Constitution in July 1864. Hence it follows that in reality there never was a law in operation in this Grand Lodge which forbids dual membership. But, say those Brethren of dual membership who are not very clear on either side of the question, whether that resolution is law or not—what shall we do in the meantime? For them no doubt the wisest plan will be to take out their dimits from the one or the other lodge and only remain members of one lodge; but those Brethren who are displeased with that resolution either in toto or at least with its retrospective nature and the manner in which it was brought up, there is that unequivocal test, the *confirmation of the minutes*; which is so forcibly pointed out by our learned and lamented Brother the late Rev. Doctor of Divinity Geo. Oliver, if by reason of its unconstitutional that part of the minutes embracing the said resolution be not confirmed at next meeting of Grand Lodge, then as a matter of course there is an end to any prohibition of dual membership until those who are anxious for it, give the proper notice and thereupon carry it by two-thirds of the votes present, the only legitimate mode of making a new law. For although there is no appeal to the Grand Lodge from the ruling of the Grand Master while presiding at Grand Lodge, yet Grand Lodge has nevertheless various remedies against the effects of a ruling which Grand Lodge considers either injurious, unjust prejudicial or unconstitutional, and among these is either non—confirmation of the minutes or the rescinding of such motions.

It is not the object of this letter to enter upon the merits or demerits of the subject of dual membership, but since it is one of considerable importance, especially for those brethren who are members of more than one lodge, some of whom are even officers in more than one lodge, it would be most injudicious for any officer or brother to insist on a rigid and an immediate adherence to that resolution, even if there were no question as to its legality; the confusion in some lodges and the injury entailed by such precipitate withdrawal of members and officers might be too great in comparison to the yet imaginary benefits and removal of mischief which are supposed to be secured by a single membership system. One most erroneous idea seems to be entertained by some brethren viz: that dual membership is something new and was not known in olden times, on this point however there is no doubt. Dual membership was known from the earliest period of the Grand Lodge of England, and for this the best evidence is, that in 1724 (only a short time after that Grand Lodge was formed) a regulation was adopted by that body prescribing that "no Brother shall belong to more than one lodge within the bills of mortality," that is, in the city of London from the adoption of this regulation two deductions are to be made, first, at that