

come versed in Masonic Jurisprudence will have to extract from the Grand Lodge Proceedings subsequent to 1875 all new rules and decisions therein published and keep them as an addenda to the present work upon that subject, until Grand Lodge decides upon a new and enlarged edition of the same. One single evening's labor is all that is required in any one year to look over the Grand Lodge Proceedings of that year, and copy therefrom such new rules and decisions in a book kept for that purpose, or, which is still more convenient, copy the same on blank paper, interleaving in the work referred to, which is the plan the writer pursues.

You say "Many hold that the decision of a Grand Master, whether confirmed or otherwise, is the law of that jurisdiction until some action is taken upon the same by the Grand Lodge. Others affirm that it is only to be held as law until Grand Lodge meets, and is not to be regarded as a precedent thereafter." And a few lines further on you say, "Decisions have time and again been given of so diametrically an opposite character that Masons become confused as to the proper explanation to be given to questions asked."

I must confess that I do not at the moment know of any such two diametrically opposite decisions within our own jurisdiction, but taking it for granted upon your statement that such decisions can be produced, I beg to submit that this is the best proof of the correctness of the opinion of those who hold that a decision of a Grand Master is only to be held as law until Grand Lodge meets, and is not to be regarded as a precedent thereafter. For if it were otherwise, if a decision of a Grand Master were law for all time to come, until reversed by Grand Lodge, a subsequent Grand Master would be bound by it as well as any other member of the craft; there would be no necessity of submitting to him for his decision, a case upon which his predecessor had

already pronounced his decision; and if, notwithstanding this fact, any Grand Master should give an opposite decision, it would clearly and distinctly be an illegal act on his part; an act which I feel persuaded no Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada will ever be guilty of.

For my own part, I fully agree with what you express to be sound Masonic doctrine, "That the ruling of a Grand Master stands good during the interim of Grand Lodge, then, if confirmed subsequently by Grand Lodge, it becomes the law of that jurisdiction, until such time as Grand Lodge sees fit to annul or amend it." And I would add, that in order to make the Ruling of a Grand Master given by him during the interim of Grand Lodge, *the law of that jurisdiction*, the confirmation thereof by the Grand Lodge should *not merely be implied*, as for instance where the Grand Master in his address speaks of some decision or ruling he has given during the interim, and where in the report upon that address no mention is made of such decision or ruling but passed over in silence. This silence should never be taken as consent or as a confirmation. *The confirmation should be positive*, plainly and distinctly expressed so as to leave no doubt as to its meaning and full bearing; and any decision or ruling of a Grand Master which is not thus confirmed by Grand Lodge, is not binding upon his successor in office but ceases to be of any effect at the same time his term of office expires, and a successor is duly elected and installed in his stead. If this were clearly understood as the nature of a decision or a ruling of a Grand Master, there would be no chance for Masons to get confused as to the proper explanation to be given to questions asked. There could never be more than one Grand Master's ruling or decision to guide them since all preceding rulings and decisions, not confirmed by Grand Lodge had become defunct,