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FOR THE CRAFTSMAN.

### RESIGNATION OF OFFICERS.

BY R. W. BRO. HENRY ROBERTSON, DEPUTY GRAND MASTER G. L. OF CANADA.

"No Warden or other officer of a lodge can resign his office." It is time that this proposition should be seriously considered. If it is a relic of the dark ages, or if it has survived its usefulness, or if the institution has outgrown the necessity of this rule, it should now be abrogated.

The reason given for the rule is that in the ceremony of installation, the officers voluntarily promise to faithfully discharge the duties of their stations for the term of one year and until the installation of their successors; to resign would be to set this promise at naught, besides making the lodge a party to the violation of a plighted word and subjecting it to inconvenience.

This objection could be met by an alteration in the installation ceremony, the promise being made to discharge the duties of the office during incumbency.

Probably a more serious question is that of past rank. A Warden is only eligible for the Master's chair by having served a full year as Warden, and a Master is only entitled to rank as a Past Master in Grand Lodge by having served a full year as Master. If the present rule was abolished and officers allowed to resign, it would probably be held, as it is now, that only those Masters and Wardens who had regularly served a full year could be entitled to the privileges of past rank. No injustice would be done by this ruling, as the officers would know

that by resigning they would forfeit their privileges.

In favor of the proposition that an officer should be allowed to resign, it is said that the restriction is an unnatural one and that it interferes with the right to dimit and is entirely contrary to the freedom of Masonry. An officer may be compelled to remove to a distance, so that it would be impossible for him to discharge the duties of his office. He may also be prevented by sickness or other disability. His absence in either case must be productive of inconvenience to the lodge.

If a member has the right to dimit at any time while not holding office, the same right should exist although he is so unfortunate as to be in office. To hold an office is considered an honor and confers certain rights. It certainly should not take away any rights that a member has.

We have officers to aid in the successful conduct of our meetings, to assist in maintaining the order and decorum essential to all deliberative bodies and to assist in conferring the degrees. To do this their attendance is necessary. If they fail in this, the "installation" does no good. Practically, there is a vacancy. If the officer leaves the place or abandons the order, he creates a vacancy just as completely as if he was dimitted, but because of his office, he is forced to remain a member and thus exemplify the absurdity of the rule.

To evoke some discussion on this topic. The following amendment to the constitution is suggested:—

"Any officer of a lodge may resign his office with the consent of the lodge, and upon his resignation being accepted, if the office is an elective one, the lodge shall fill the vacancy by an election at the next regular meeting, after notice of such election has been sent to all the members; and if the office is an appointed one, the Master may fill the vacancy by his appointment at once."