

SOVEREIGN GREAT PRIORY OF CANADA.

OF THE UNITED AND MILITARY ORDERS OF
THE TEMPLE AND OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSA-
LEM, PALESTINE, RHODES AND MALTA—
STATEMENT OF THEIR CASE.

To all Knights Templar:—

The Great Priory of Canada has been compelled to declare non-intercourse with two Encampments of Knights Templar, working in New Brunswick, under Warrants issued by the Chapter-General of Scotland. These two Encampments (St. John and St. Stephen), are the only Templar bodies in the Dominion of Canada who do not recognize the authority and sovereignty of the Great Priory.

The Masonic law of the exclusive jurisdiction of Grand Bodies within their respective limits, as universally admitted, adopted and acknowledged on the North American continent, imperatively demanded this action on the part of the Great Priory; but it was not taken until every other means had been tried, and every effort made to induce these bodies to join in one harmonious whole all the Templars in Canada.

Since 1876, they have been constantly invited to unite with the Great Priory. Offers have been made to receive them on terms of equality, and other offers to allow them to fix their own terms; but all overtures have been as constantly rejected. They have been fully aware for a long time that it was the intention of the Great Priory to maintain and uphold its jurisdictional rights, and it is only when forbearance has ceased to be a virtue, and the interests of Templarism in Canada have become endangered, that this final action has been taken and non-intercourse declared.

The Templar law of the United States fully recognizes the exclusive jurisdiction of governing Grand Bodies, and the statutes of the Grand Encampment of the United States expressly declare, that upon the formation of a State Grand Commandery, it is the duty of every subordinate within its jurisdiction to enroll itself under the banner of such Grand Commandery, have its Warrant and Charter issued thereby, and obey its constitution and statutes.

The Great Priory of Canada accepts this position, and is prepared to join heartily with all other Grand Bodies on this continent in upholding it.

The authority of the Great Priory, as having jurisdiction over the Dominion of Canada, is unquestioned. It has been recognized as such by the Convent-General of England and Wales, and by the Grand Encampment of the United States, with whom it has exchanged repre-

sentatives. The Scottish Encampments in New Brunswick themselves do not dispute its jurisdiction. Their only argument is, that they derived their existence from a foreign power, before the Great Priory had become independent, and that therefore any proceeding of the Great Priory is no concern of theirs.

In view of the law of jurisdiction, as stated above, this position is entirely indefensible. Whether the Great Priory was formed first or last, is a matter of no consequence. The only question would be, is it formed, or has it a legal existence? If so, then it is the duty of every subordinate body within its jurisdiction to enroll itself under the banner of the Great Priory, and acknowledge and obey its statutes.

It is the concern of the Great Priory that there should be but one governing body of Knights Templar in this jurisdiction; it is the concern of all Grand Bodies that their exclusive jurisdiction within their respective limits should be undisputed. It is the concern of every Knight Templar on this continent, that the law as laid down by the highest authority, should be universally observed; and it is equally the concern of all the Knights Templar in New Brunswick, that they should be in harmony with the great body of Templars of North America.

Of the legal existence of the Great Priory of Canada there can be no manner of doubt. A Warrant is in existence (in Dr. Scadding's collection), authorizing the establishment of an Encampment of Knights Templar at York (Toronto), in 1800. Another Encampment was formed at Kingston in 1824, and revived in 1854. Others were formed at Toronto in 1854, and at Quebec in 1855. A Provincial Grand Conclave was duly formed, in accordance with the usual regulations and customs of Freemasonry in 1855, with Col. W. J. B. McLeod Moore as Provincial Grand Commander. This Grand Body was recognized by the Grand Encampment of the United States, and the edict of the then Grand Master enjoined upon all "Subordinate and Worthy Sir Knights to hold no fellowship or communication with any pretenders to our Order, coming from said Province and not hailing from the Encampments" taking part in its formation.

The Grand Conclave continued as such until 1868, when, in consequence of the political changes resulting in the creation of the Dominion of Canada, the Grand Priory of Canada was formed, with Colonel Moore as Grand Prior.

In 1876, the name was again changed to that of the Great Priory of Canada, and admission was gained to the Convent-General on equal terms with the other Great Priorities forming that body.