

Grand Officers to visit the Lodges."

In the year 1726, further legislation in this direction was found necessary, on account of the great increase of the Craft and in the number of country Lodges. The office of Provincial Grand Master was therefore created by constitutional enactment, so that there might be an immediate head in each province, to whom application might be made in all matters concerning which jurisdiction was given to him, without waiting for the decision or opinion of the Grand Lodge.

The duties and powers of the Provincial Grand Master were defined by the constitutional provisions creating the office; and from an examination of these provisions we find that they are very similar to our present regulations governing the office of District Deputy Grand Master. Their whole tenor is the same, and in many parts the language is identical in both.

We may then fairly conclude that our District Deputy Grand Masters are the legitimate successors here, of the English Provincial Grand Masters; or that they have taken their place here, and that their origin may be placed in the year 1726. And as the office has been created by enactment in every case where it exists; it follows that the regulations which govern it are to be considered as local in their character, and as not forming part of the general Masonic law.

District Deputy Grand Masters *can only exercise such functions as are specially given to them by the constitutional provisions which create the office;* and subject to the explanations and modifications thereof made from time to time by the Grand Lodge under which they act. They are the assistants or deputies of the Grand Master, and are distinguished from the real Deputy Grand Master by the limitation of their powers to a particular jurisdiction or district.

They have no inherent powers, such as are possessed by the Grand Master, and they cannot assume to exercise

any prerogatives which are not laid down in the Constitution. In the first Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Canada, a provision was inserted, that the District Deputy Grand Master (in the absence of the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master) should have, in his district, rank and powers similar to those possessed by the Grand Master himself. This clause was afterwards struck out; and we are, therefore, spared the consideration of what would now be certain to be, the cause of many and serious complications. It is far better that the duties and powers of this officer should be strictly defined, rather than that an opening should be left for each occupant of the office to decide for himself what his prerogatives should be.

In noticing the subject of District Deputy Grand Masters more in detail, we find that there are four points to be considered, namely:—

1. Their Selection.
2. Their Duties.
3. Their Powers.
4. Their Disabilities.

Before, however, proceeding further, it is necessary to mention that the regulations which govern this office differ widely in different jurisdictions. They depend solely upon local law, and it is therefore impossible to make any observations of general application. Our remarks will be confined to the jurisdictions of the Grand Lodges of Canada and Quebec. The provisions regarding the office of District Deputy Grand Master in the Constitutions of these two Grand Lodges are very similar. They differ only in a few points, and these differences will be noticed as they arise.

I.—THEIR SELECTION.

The District Deputy Grand Master for each district is elected each year, by such of the representatives of the Lodges in the District as are present at the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge.