

that he had got by mistake into the hall of some other society.

And this is just why we would like to see a convention held, as we suggested in the beginning of this article. —*Masonic Chronicle*.

BY-LAWS OF MASONIC LODGES.

Every Masonic Lodge must have a code of by-laws for its government. Unlike most other organized bodies, however, the power to enact its own by-laws does not reside primarily in a Lodge, but in the Grand Lodge under which it holds its charter. Some Grand Lodges exercise their full powers by adopting a uniform code of by-laws for Lodges holding charters under them, while others concede to Lodges in part the right to adopt their own. In the latter case, however, such by-laws do not become valid until approved by the Grand Lodge, so the enactment of them is really by the Grand Lodge. When thus approved, they become a law for the government of the Lodge, and must be followed strictly in the transaction of business and management of its affairs. They cannot be altered or amended except in the manner provided in them for alterations or amendments, and any change must be submitted for the approval of the Grand Lodge as in the first instance.

In many organizations the practice of suspending a by-law for the time being prevails, in order to meet some emergency which has arisen, in which the body desires to act contrary to its provisions. That such a right exists is very generally conceded where there is no law prohibiting it. In a body thus empowered to adopt its own by-laws its government is wholly within itself, and if the members by unanimous consent decide to suspend one or more of its by-laws, for the time being, there is nothing to prevent it, although such action is always of doubtful expediency, and is often productive of bad results. Unless all the members have been duly notified

of such proposed action it is not treating the absent ones fairly, as they have the right to expect that the proceedings will be in accordance with existing regulations.

As a Masonic Lodge cannot change one of its by-laws without the consent of the Grand Lodge, it must necessarily follow that it cannot suspend one for the time being without the same consent. It cannot of its own volition, set aside what it cannot make. No emergency can arise to justify such action. The Worshipful Master and every other officer, before being installed into office is obligated to support and maintain the Constitution and general regulations of the Grand Lodge, and to discharge the duties of his office to the best of his ability. He will not, therefore, knowingly permit any violation of Masonic law, and should be especially careful to see that the by-laws of his Lodge are strictly enforced.

In noting the proceedings of the various Grand Lodges, as they come to hand, we find in the official reports of Grand Masters many dispensations granted to Lodges to perform some act contrary to the provisions of their by-laws. We have always supposed that it was the duty of a Grand Master to see that existing laws were enforced, and that, of all others, he should be the last to assist in violating them. Some of these Most Worshipfuls seem to think differently. They appear to be as much of an autocrat as was King Solomon in his palmy days. As dispensators they are a success. If a Lodge wants to spread a ballot in less than the required time, a dispensation is granted. We notice one instance of a dispensation to receive the petition and ballot for the candidate at a special meeting. How about the previous notice and due inquiry into his character, that the W. M. obligated himself, should have in every instance? What right has a Grand Master to obligate a Mason not to perform a certain act, and then give him permission to vio-