

as the head of the Order. The expression of such desire was as follows:—

“Inasmuch as the Great Priory has this day unanimously declared, in the revision of its Statutes, its authority in and throughout the Dominion of Canada, over all bodies of the Order of the Temple and appendant degrees; His Royal Highness the Grand Master will be graciously pleased to absolve this Great Priory, and all Officers and Fratres, members thereof, from their obligations of fealty to him as Supreme Grand Master, so that this Great Priory may be enabled fully and without doubt to affirm and maintain the position which it has taken upon itself as an Independent Great Priory,” etc.

Here was an affirmation of independence; an expression of a purpose to relinquish all connection with the Convent General of England, from which body they had received their Patent, or Charter, of their establishment. The Prince of Wales, as Grand Master of the Order, on the receipt of notice of the proceedings, and the appeal accompanying the same, was graciously pleased to comply with the request, and absolve the members of Great Priory from all allegiance, as Knights Templars, to himself. This dissolution of connection and recognition of independence was granted on the 17th of April, 1884, since which date only, has the Great Priory of Canada been in a condition to assert its independence, and to claim supreme governing powers. Whatever criticism may be made as to the manner of procedure, there can be no question that a dissolution of the former connection has been accomplished, and that the Great Priory is no longer a “Provincial subordinate of England,” but an independent and sovereign body. The old organization, by a change within itself, having the approval of the parent organization in England, and being set free from restrictions and imitations, was merged into a new

organization that seems to be of lawful constitution, and as such, entitled to exercise a large governing power. It is urged by some, that the old body should have dissolved when separation was decided upon, an invitation being extended to all the Templar organizations in Canada to unite in the formation of an independent Great Priory, or Grand Encampment. That this course was not pursued, does not seem a sufficient reason for pronouncing against the legality of the Great Priory as now organized. There are precedents for the action taken, and it is every way better, we think, to regard the Great Priory of Canada as having been lawfully established. It would have been better—certainly more democratic—if, when independency was resolved on, all the Encampments—those of Scottish as well as English origin—had been invited to participate in the formation of a new Grand body. Very likely it was a mistake that this was not done, but the omission, taking all things into account, does not seem to be fatal to the claims of the Great Priory, which presents sufficiently good reasons, we think, why it should be regarded as the supreme governing body of the Order of the Temple in Canada.

It does not follow, however, that the right to coerce the Scottish Encampments in New Brunswick, belongs to that increase of power which has rightfully come to the Great Priory. Now that there is an independent Grand body having jurisdiction, not only over its constituents, but, as it would appear, over what before was common and unoccupied territory, we think no foreign Grand body of Templars could lawfully create subordinates within such territory. Conceding this much, however, we cannot justify the Great Priory in its attempts to force the Scottish Encampments into allegiance to itself. These Encampments were chartered by a foreign organization, the peer of the Great Priory, or Convent General