

A. We think that the age of a candidate is just as important in this connection as his residence or occupation. It forms a leading piece of information, which the members of the lodge are entitled to have before proceeding to ballot. It is one of the main elements to be considered by them in determining in their own minds the advisability of his admittance, and it may prove a safeguard against fraud or the admission of unqualified persons. It is necessary that the age should be placed on the summons along with the other particulars, as required by the Constitution, and its omission would justify the W. M., on objection being taken, in postponing the ballot until the proper notices should have been sent.

Q. Should the returns of lodges be made to the Grand Secretary semi-annually? Would it be a violation of the Constitution for a lodge to make it a habit to forward returns only once a year?

A. The returns of lodges should be made to the Grand Secretary semi-annually. It would be a direct violation of the Constitution for a lodge to make returns only once a year. See Section 29 of the article of the Constitution "of private lodges." This provides that the returns shall be made semi-annually, and a failure to make returns for more than *one year*, renders the lodge liable to be erased, and also disqualifies the representatives of the lodge from attending Grand Lodge. Besides the actual disqualification and liability to erasure above stated, in case of default for over a year, we are of opinion that a failure to make the returns for over six months, or semi-annually, would render the lodge *liable* to suspension, and its representatives liable to disqualification, on complaint being made to Grand Lodge. In the case of a first offence, the penalty would not be likely to be inflicted, but an habitual violation of the Constitution could hardly be overlooked.

Q. Can a Masonic lodge enact a by-law depriving a member who may be in arrears

for dues of the right to speak or vote upon any question?

A. No. Any such by-law would be illegal and void. No brother can be deprived of any of his Masonic rights or privileges, except by a formal conviction after due trial. And this principle is so dearly prized and highly esteemed as to be termed "the Magna Charta of Masonic liberty." Our Grand Master Simpson, in his address in 1865, after quoting a similar by-law, says:—"This is clearly unconstitutional, for no brother can be deprived of any of his rights or privileges without due trial; neither can a brother be suspended for non-payment of dues until he has been duly summoned to show cause why he should not be suspended. Should no attention be paid to the summons, then of course the case would go by default, but if the brother attend he has a right to a trial."

Q. An applicant is rejected in one lodge and is subsequently accepted in another, receiving the first and second degrees; the W. M. of the lodge which declined to admit him is requested to confer the third degree, but declines. Is the action of the W. M. justifiable or proper?

A. We think that the action of the W. M. in this case is both justifiable and proper. His own lodge, by its rejection of this particular candidate, plainly intimated either that he was not a proper person to be admitted, or that he was personally distasteful to some member or members. It then becomes a question of courtesy. The conferring of the degree would be an act of courtesy to the W. M. of the other lodge who requests it. On the other hand, it would be discourteous to the first lodge to introduce amongst its members for any purpose one whom they had rejected. It might cause some of those members to retire, and it might be very unpleasant to some others to be compelled to assist in conferring a degree upon one whom they deem unfit to receive it. On the whole, we think that the W. M. should act in deference to the expressed opinion of his lodge; that