

ENGLAND v. QUEBEC.

BY BRO. W. J. HUGHAN.

It appears to me that the difficulty now existing, Masonically, between England and Quebec should be restated, so that the real cause of the present state of things may be apparent, and no side issues allowed to warp the judgment. The "Voice of Masonry" (Chicago, U. S. A.), has ably contended for the rights of minorities as well as of majorities, and its editor has rightly appreciated the position taken by our Grand Lodge for so many years. So also has the Editor of *The Keystone*.

So far back as we can go with the records (which period really covers the formation of all Grand Lodges, from that of Ireland in 1729) it has been the custom of the Grand Lodge of England eventually—though not always very rapidly or willingly—to recognize all Grand Lodges, legally formed, so long as those lodges which declined to join the new organizations were allowed to continue their allegiance as before. In all such cases the premier Grand Lodge (instituted in 1717) never issuing any new warrants in such Territories or Countries, and simply claiming any of its lodges, which declined to participate or join the new body until such time as they happily decide to unite with the majority.

Now, I submit that this being so, and always having been so, in relation to other old Grand Lodges, and inasmuch as England is the senior Grand Lodge in the world, it is not for any of our respected brethren in the United States, or elsewhere, to require England to act differently. We, as a Grand Lodge, are most anxious to respect the wishes of a majority of lodges in any country, district, or province, and, if they agree to constitute a Grand Lodge of their own, it will always be found that on proper announcement thereof, we shall be as ready to acknowledge the new body as any Grand

Lodge can possibly be; provided always that a fair majority of lodges and brethren take part in the formation thereof, and that the minority of lodges have as much liberty to decline, as the others composing the majority, have exercised in agreeing to constitute the new Grand Lodge.

To all intents and purposes, this is a *Landmark*, sanctioned by the usages and customs of the oldest Grand Lodge—from which all others have directly or indirectly sprung—and hence our Canadian and United States brethren should recognize this factor in the matter, and whilst making what Rules and Regulations they please for all the Grand Lodges in their jurisdictions, they might, at least, leave us free to manage our own affairs, for it is essentially and Masonically a subject about which, whilst we may all agree to differ, to interfere in is no part of the duty of any outside the jurisdictions immediately concerned. The Grand Lodge of England requires all its subordinates to obey its Laws and Customs, just as other Grand Lodges do, and hence no lodges can divest themselves of their responsibilities, which have been Warranted by our Grand Lodge, save in the way laid down by the Constitutions and usages of the English Craft, of which they form a part.

When the Grand Lodge of Canada was recognized by the Grand Lodge of England, it was on the understanding that those lodges which declined to join that Body be allowed to continue their allegiance as before. This was agreed to, not because England wanted the Fees (for as all know, who are familiar with the subject, they are simply nominal), but simply as it was the custom of our Grand Lodge, and could not be departed from.

When the Grand Lodge of Quebec was at last recognized by the Grand Lodge of Canada (so far as any evidence extends), our Quebec brethren agreed to permit of any lodges which