

1846.

The shilling fines for neglect of giving notice of non-attendance imposed by the original By-laws occur frequently in the cash books and must have amounted to a very respectable sum yearly, although they were not always rigidly exacted. In the case of Hugh Brown, on 4th December, 1846, who "craved exemption in future from paying any fines, in consequence of the situation he now holds 'as Keeper of the Prison of Stornoway.'" the request was granted by the Brethren. On 28th December, 1863, the fine was reduced to 6d., and on 8th January, 1875, was finally abolished.

After a proposal to abolish fines in future was brought forward, on the motion of the Senior Warden, seconded by the Worshipful Substitute Master, it was agreed that instead of rescinding the rule having reference to fines, a resolution be passed meantime that until the Lodge reconsider and come to a final decision upon this subject no fines would be levied on Members absent from Statutory Meetings." On 6th August, 1880, "In consideration of the irregular attendance of the greater part of the members of the Lodge, Bro. Geo. Macleod gave notice that at next monthly meeting of the Lodge he would move that the fines for non-attendance be renewed, but Bro. McLeod after consideration agreed not to press his motion meantime." This is the last attempt to revive a rule which must have been exceedingly useful in the earlier days of the Lodge, when the membership was limited, although it was undoubtedly a thorn in the flesh to many of the Brethren.

1847.

The Foundation Stone of the Lews Castle was laid with Masonic honours upon the 30th November, 1847, the builder, Sir James Matheson, having shortly before purchased the Lews Estate from the Hon. J. A. Stewart MacKenzie. This important event in local history is thus chronicled in the Lodge Minutes:

"The Brethren having met pursuant to adjournment, and the Lodge being regularly constituted into an Apprentice Meeting, they then walked in procession along Kenneth street, up Francis street, and the street opposite the jail, till they came to the new road that leads to the Lews Lodge, proceeded along said road till they arrived at the new building in course of erection at the proprietor's residence, when the foundation stone thereof (after depositing several coins, documents and books, together with the names of the office bearers of the Lodge, in the cavity made in said stone), was laid with Masonic Honours. Thereafter the Brethren returned to the Lodge, along Bayhead street, when the Lodge was duly closed until seven o'clock in the evening, to celebrate the festival of St. Andrew's. At seven o'clock, the Brethren having met, the Lodge was regularly constituted into an Apprentice Meeting, and the evening was spent with conviviality, friendship and brotherly love." See p. 25.

1848.

On 5th May, 1848, we observe the following minute of another event of local interest: "The Brethren did not assemble at the Lodge this evening, having gone to witness the taking up of the 'Norge' of Drontheim, on the Silp, being the first vessel taken thereon."

At a meeting of the office bearers of the Lodge, held on 8th August, 1848, it was "resolved that estimates be procured from Messrs. Laidlaw and Sons, Glasgow, and others, for introducing gas into the Mason Lodge, viz.: Two lights into the principal hall, one in each of the back rooms, two lobby lights, one in the room lately used as a reading room, and one at the gateway, when erected. Messrs. Laidlaw despatched their representative to Stornoway, and on the 3rd of November, 1848, a petition was presented in the Lodge from David Laidlaw, gas engineer in Glasgow, craving to be admitted a member. He was duly entered Apprentice, passed and raised. The Brethren evidently had a keen eye to business, in fact the methods used in adding to the membership of the Lodge seem in those days to have been somewhat unscrupulous, e.g., 7th December, 1848. "The Brethren having taken into consideration the trouble and expense which the Secretary is often put to in getting members to join the Lodge, they have resolved to allow him the sum of £2 per annum in addition to his salary, as a compensation for any advance he may