

the proceedings of the National Fraternal Congress. Apart from the particular interest we as Independent Foresters take in this celebrated convention owing to the fact of our Chief presiding at its sessions, there were matters discussed and action taken that will be of interest to every fraternalist in America or elsewhere.

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We learn from the *Fraternal Monitor* that a new order has been established—a juvenile auxiliary to the modern Woodmen. The order is known by the singular appellation of “Patriotic Order of the Owl.” This is not the same as the bird mentioned in the text: “I am like a pelican of the wilderness, I am like an owl of the desert.” On the contrary, it is a more domesticated fowl that has been dwelling in the forest a long time with the Woodmen.

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The *Insurance Record*, commenting on the alliterative forms of a certain order, wants a new order started under the name “Independent and Infernal Idiots of Insurance Imbecility.” We always did think the policyholders of old line companies ought to combine to try and close up the dividends, commissions and other rat-hole expenses of their concerns. But this is the first time we ever heard a really appropriate title for a policyholders’ association.

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At Owen Sound, besides addressing a mass meeting at McLaughlin Park, the Chief presided for a considerable time at the indoor sessions, replied to an address from Court Northern Light of the I.O.F., an address by the local Court of the C.O.F., and a unanimous resolution of congratulation from the High Court, and, also, made the Mayor and an Alderman Foresters-at-sight. He did not wish to overtax himself, however, so he left to preside over the National Fraternal Congress.

Canvassing and Caucusing.

It is sometimes borne in upon the mind at High Court meetings and similar conventions that a good deal of canvassing is being done and that the canvassing spirit, if carried too far, may be a dangerous usurper of the fraternal spirit. This is a difficult subject to pronounce upon; for one man will draw the line very sharply, while another will allow considerable latitude. As a rule, the old attendant at High Court who is known to nearly everybody, and who has, therefore, no need of canvassing, is very pronounced against the iniquities of electioneering. On the other hand, the ambitious new member who is perhaps thinking overmuch of his own claims to greatness, is apt to despise the lack of system displayed and to try and paste over the record of proceedings a leaf from the tactics of practical politicians.

It is evident that the man who succeeds in dividing any Court or Lodge (Subordinate or High) into two definite parties, succeeds in destroying the fraternal spirit and introducing in its place a spirit of partisan animosity and mistrust. It is, therefore, wise for every member or delegate of an Order when he is called upon to cast his ballot between brother and brother, to have some rules to guide him when he is approached or solicited on behalf of a candidate. We shall endeavor to suggest a few simple considerations in this respect.

In the first place, it does not appear very objectionable or even at all unfraternal for Bro. Smith, who knows that Bro. Jones would like a certain office, to ask his acquaintances at the convention to give Bro. Jones a vote. This is a natural thing to do; at any rate, it is so far natural that a brother doing it might be considerably surprised if you told him it was wicked and unfraternal.

But it is so easy for Bro. Smith, canvassing just a little for Bro. Jones, to join hands with Bro. Brown, who is canvassing just a little for Bro. Robinson who is not running for the same office. Thus almost unconsciously you have formed a “caucus.”

Now, it is in the nature of a caucus, as in the nature of a cancer, to grow; and though cut out and separated, to grow again and keep growing and eating out the body it lives upon. Every time the caucus meets, it becomes a larger caucus, more systematic, more highly organized. A chairman is appointed; men are allotted to see certain other men; the objects and motives of certain candidates are discussed, and in their absence probably misjudged. Then follows what is a natural consequence, a complete ticket is drafted covering all the elective offices—a ticket to be swallowed regardless. To facilitate the purpose of electing this ticket, the individual names of which might escape the memory, the ticket is printed and handed to the faithful. It is elected remorselessly, there being no organized opposition. A voter, more clear-sighted than polite, spoils his ballot by writing over it “Machine wins.” The result is never in doubt. It will then be in order for the victorious machine voters (after having rejoiced) to separate and go aside, every man by himself, and each hold his head in his hands while he tries to think how much he has added to the fraternal spirit and how well he has vindicated his independence as a man.

It may be that some others will say to themselves, “We too shall caucus and get out tickets, and when next election is held we shall be there also.” But this action, though provoked, is more unfraternal than the first. For in such opposition the first caucus will find its excuse and its justifi-