

1772—1773.

After March 5th, 1772, we can find no trace of any Lodge Minutes. Whether the meetings were discontinued or whether the proceedings were written into another book, which has since been lost, is uncertain, but the latter is most probable, as we have record of payment of dues being made up to June, 1773, and the Lodge also still possesses its original Charter of 1767. Again in a minute dated 27th December, 1797, we find that "Bro. Donald Morrison, having appeared at the door and craved to be admitted as a visiting member, and several members knowing him to be an approved Mason, and of good character, and originally of this Lodge, he was accordingly admitted, and unanimously voted a permanent member." As there is no record in the books of the initiation of, or any payment by this Brother, he must have been initiated at a meeting held some time between 1773 and 1797, which shows that occasional meetings at least were held. However this may be, the period from 5th March, 1772, to 9th September, 1797, remains a blank, but upon the latter date the Fortrose Lodge seems to have taken a new lease of life, as may be seen from the following extract from the minutes:

1797.

"Fortrose Lodge, Stornoway, the ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven years. The said Lodge being regularly constituted by the Right Worshipful Bro. John Reid, Master, and the Worshipful Bros. Malcolm Macneil and George Bartleman, Senior and Junior Wardens, the Lodge proceeded to work according to ordinary form, when Brothers Sir John Reid, Francis Humberston MacKenzie (Lord Seaforth), John Reid, John Cowan and James Black, all of them Past Masters, and Brother Roderick MacKenzie, entered apprentice, appeared at the door, and craved to be admitted to the honour of visiting the Lodge, and the members present knowing them to be approved Masons of good character, they were admitted accordingly, and afterwards unanimously voted to be permanent members of said Lodge. Thereafter, Alexander Maciver, James Robertson and Kenneth McIver successively petitioned to be admitted Free and Accepted Masons, and several members knowing them to be men of good characters, they were accordingly successively entered apprentices.

"Thereafter, the Lodge taking it into consideration that they had been long in disuse of holding regular meetings, think it expedient to elect a new set of officers to serve for the remainder of the year ending on St. John's Day next, and they accordingly elected the said Right Worshipful Brother Francis Humberston Mackenzie to be their Master, the Right Worshipful Brother John Reid to be Deputy Master, the Worshipful Brother John Cowan to be Senior Warden, the Worshipful Brother Sir John Reid, Junior Warden, Bro. James Robertson to be Secretary, Bro. Alexander Maciver to be Treasurer, Bro. George Bartleman to be Tyler, all to the Day of St. John next.

"Thereafter, the Lodge judged it expedient to appoint a Committee to revise the By-laws of the Lodge, and to recommend such new ones as they should think proper, and they accordingly appointed the Right Worshipful the Deputy Master, the Worshipful the Wardens, the Secretary and Treasurer, and Brothers Malcolm McNeil and Kenneth McIver to be a Committee, and to report at the next General Meeting of the Lodge, to be held here on the first Thursday of October next."

The By-laws were duly revised by the Committee, and the following new rules were added:—

1. From the first Thursday of March to the first Thursday of September, the hour of meeting is to be altered to 7 p.m.; for the rest of the year to remain as usual.
2. The funds of the Lodge are to be appropriated to the relief and assistance of reduced or decayed Brethren, their wives and children. That petition for such relief must be made addressed to the R. W. M., Wardens and Brethren, and enforced by the recommendation of three Master Masons.
3. That no reduced or decayed member can have any just claim unless he has been a permanent member of the Lodge for the space of three years, and has paid all dues to the Lodge.