

as well as the great difficulty of obtaining the services of qualified Brothers to serve in the respective offices. The objects desired, I think, might be attained by rendering service in Degree Lodges a qualification for the higher offices in the Order, and I submit whether the present system might not be improved by establishing in each subordinate Lodge, situate, where no Degree Lodge exists, an additional Office of Degree Master, also conferring on that Officer eligibility for higher offices for services rendered in that capacity.

While upon the subject of according to Brothers, for services rendered, qualifications for the higher offices, which do not now exist, I deem it to be my duty to bring under your consideration the position of several members of the Order distinguished for their services in the higher offices, and for the zeal which they have manifested but who are debarred by the present law from receiving the Secretary's Degree, in consequence of not having served in that office, and are thus laboring under a disability to attain the higher offices in the Order. In several instances the Brethren alluded to could not, under any circumstances, devote the time required for the due performance of the duties appertaining to the office of Secretary—in some cases, in consequence of their professional avocations and in others owing to their public engagements—but have rendered good service by the zealous discharge of their official duties and enjoy largely the confidence of their respective Lodges. It is submitted whether some special enactment might not be passed to afford relief to the members so circumstanced, making it requisite that the application should be made by their respective Lodges, who, it is to be presumed, are the best judges whether their services entitle them to receive it, and thereby retaining that salutary principle that services *alone* should confer rank.

Much inconvenience has been felt, in newly constituted Lodges, from the difficulty experienced in finding duly qualified members to fill the chairs of the officers, during their absence from the place of meeting, it having frequently occurred that the two highest officers have been obliged to be absent at the same time, and the chairs have been occupied by their supporters. The circumstance is presented to your notice under a conviction that an enactment might be passed to remedy the inconvenience confining its operation to newly constituted Lodges for a limited period.

I make no doubt that the subject of Contributions and Benefits will engage your serious attention with the view of deciding whether it would not be desirable to pass a law, requiring Lodges to propor-

tion the one to the other, upon a well constituted scale, it being a matter involving the most important considerations upon the future well-being of the Order.

The present undefined and unsatisfactory state of the law, in all its bearings, with respect to the mode of preferring charges against members who have committed offences at variance with the principles of the Order, will, I trust, form a portion of your deliberations; in such case I would respectfully recommend the following as the most important points which, in my humble judgment, should engage your attention:

That the Brother preferring the charge, be required to give such a specification thereof, that the accused may be prepared to meet it, and the Lodge be able, *in limine*, to judge whether it be of a frivolous nature, or otherwise not cognizable by a Lodge, and thereby save the accused Brother the mortification of being cited to appear before a Committee, to answer charges of an untenable and frivolous nature.

To adopt regulations as to the mode to be observed by Committees, in investigating charges, and the trial of Brethren thereon.

To define the cases, and under what circumstances, appeals shall be permitted to be taken from the decision of Committees to Lodges, and from Lodges to the higher Tribunals of the Order; as well as to regulate the method to be observed in conducting and hearing appeals, so that a uniform system may be followed throughout this jurisdiction.

The present system has been found to create vexatious delays and consequent disunion, to prevent which by every possible means, as being incompatible with our principles, should be our constant study.

The Grand Secretary will lay before you an account of the fiscal transactions of this Lodge, as well as the several Reports, Communications, and other Documents received during the recess.

The important duties devolving upon the D. D. G. Sires, renders it highly necessary that their authority should be held in respect, and nothing could be more conducive to that desirable object than to have their powers clearly defined; I therefore recommend that matter also to your consideration.

The appointment of a Grand Committee, composed of Officers of the Grand Lodge, to aid in the details of the Executive Business of the Order, during the recess, has been attended with the most beneficial results, in many instances, in the United States, and I therefore deem the subject worthy of your consideration, feeling confident that the introduction of a similar system here would be attended with like advantages.

Having noticed such subjects as I deemed it necessary to bring prominently under your consideration, I will, in conclusion, submit for your