

Canada to England.

ADDRESS OF THE GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF CANADA, TO THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF ENGLAND.

To the Most Worshipful the Grand Master, the Right Worshipful the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Officers, and Brethren of the United Grand Lodge, of Free and Accepted Masons of England.

We, the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Officers and Brethren, of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Canada, with sincere respect and Fraternal regard, send Greeting.

The Free Masons of Canada to the number of 41 Lodges, having united in the establishment of a Grand Lodge of Canada (as you have doubtless already been informed,) we feel it our first duty to lay before you, as the parent to whom the majority of our members owe their Masonic existence, a full explanation of the circumstances which dictated, and the course we pursued in taking a step which, while it determines the rule of the Grand Lodge of England over us, as Lodges, we confidently believe will not sever, and we earnestly trust will not weaken, the Holy Bond of Brotherhood so long existing between us as Masons.

In offering these explanations, we feel assured by the purity of the motives by which we were actuated, and the justice of our cause, that we shall not ask from you in vain that generous and truly Masonic consideration which has ever distinguished the Grand Lodge of England.

The absence in this Province of that progress in our Masonic Art which has invariably attended the existence of duly constituted Lodges in every other country, had long been a source of unfeigned sorrow to all zealous Canadian Freemasons, who observed with deep regret that the advancement of the Order was by no means commensurate with the rapid improvement which marked every other branch of the social and political economy of this noble Province.

The principal influences which retarded the progress of Masonry in Canada cannot be better described than by the following extracts from a circular on the subject, issued by the Lodge of Strict Observance, No. 833, R. E., of the city of Hamilton, in the month of September last.

Adverting to the alleged grievances suffered by the Craft it is there stated:

"The first and most important is, the diversity of interest and the want of harmony in action and in working, resulting from the growth in the Province of Lodges hailing from the Grand Lodges of different countries, thus perpetuating local and national feelings and prejudices, and conflicting interests, and consequent estrangement of affection amongst the brethren of an order that knows no country and is confined to no race.

"The second is, the manifest injustice of Lodges in this Province being required, out of their limited means, to contribute to the accumulated funds of the Grand Lodge of England, in addition to having to support a Provincial Grand Lodge—and especially as the great proportion of claims for Masonic assistance that are daily and hourly occurring in this Province, are made by brethren emigrating from the Mother Country, whilst instances of Masons leaving this for England in a position to require such relief are rare, if they ever occur at all. The Grand Lodge of England thus doubly tax the Fraternity here by transferring to these shores numberless claimants for Masonic benevolence, at the same time that they are receiving from us a portion of our means of affording that assistance.

"The third is, the inconvenience arising from the lengthened periods that must elapse, in consequence of the distance between us and the Grand Lodge of England, before we can receive replies to our communications, sanction to our proceedings, warrants, certificates of membership, etc., even in cases of emergency; and instances have often occurred of brethren being deprived of the privileges of the Craft, by leaving for foreign countries before the arrival of their certificates—for which, it must be borne in mind they had paid

previously to their initiation. This disadvantage is unavoidable even were the correspondence and remittances of our Lodges promptly acknowledged and complied with, but which unhappily is far from being the case; important communications having frequently remained without reply for months, and in some cases for years, greatly to the inconvenience of the Fraternity here, and notwithstanding that complaints of such neglect have been repeatedly represented to the Grand Lodge of England through the regular channel of communication, and also by resolution of the Provincial Grand Lodge through the Grand Registrar of England, they have as yet received no attention nor redress—a neglect highly discourteous towards the Masons of Canada, and seriously injurious to the general interests of the Craft.

"The last, but in our estimation by no means the least of the alleged grievances, is the appointment of our Provincial Grand Master by the Grand Master of England, which virtually leaves the appointment in the hands of the Masons of England—who, at a distance of near 4000 miles, may reasonably be expected to be practically ignorant of the social position and requirements of the Craft in Canada—and inasmuch as the Provincial Grand Officers are nominated by the Provincial Grand Master, the efficiency or inefficiency of the administration of our affairs depends entirely upon the eligible or ineligible selection of a Provincial Grand Master made for us by the Grand Master of England—and this selection is made without reference to the opinions of the Fraternity in Canada, as to the Masonic attainments, zeal or interest in the Craft, and general qualifications of the nominee, although they would naturally be the best informed on the subject, and most deeply interested in the result.

"The Provincial Grand Lodge, thus constituted is placed in the equivocal position of being irresponsible to, and independent of the Craft in Canada, whilst experience has shown that body to be unable to secure from the Grand Lodge of England the attention and respect due to their position as a Provincial Grand Lodge."

The sentiments contained in the foregoing extracts were participated in by the whole of the Masonic Fraternity, with scarcely an individual exception, nor were such feelings and convictions of recent formation, the necessity of establishing a Canadian Grand Lodge, having for many years occupied the serious consideration of the brethren, but hailing as they did from different Grand Lodges, and distributed as they were over a Province extending in length 1,600 miles, and breadth averaging over 220 miles, being three times as large as Great Britain and Ireland—the means of communication, too, being very imperfect—they had but few opportunities of meeting together, and much time, therefore, elapsed before any action was taken in the matter.

The first important step occurred at a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge at Upper Canada, held in October, A. L., 5852, when after expressing the highest respect and esteem for their parent Grand Lodge of England, a resolution was unanimously passed, to the effect that it is absolutely necessary for the welfare of Masonry in the Province, that an independent Grand Lodge should be established, having full power to control the working and operations of the Craft in this quarter of the globe, and that all funds accruing from the same should be retained by the said Grand Lodge, to meet the urgent necessities of the Craft in the Province.

In May, A. L., 5853, the same Grand Body, (the Provincial Grand Lodge,) adopted and forwarded a petition to the Grand Lodge of England, which after briefly narrating the Masonic history of Western Canada, from the year 1792, and stating—that the advancement of Masonry had been of a less cheering nature than the progress of Canada in population, intelligence and wealth, had warranted them in anticipating, and that their funds were drained by the constant demands, from indigent brethren, emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, until they were unable to carry out the great charitable objects of the institutions,—prayed that they might be allowed to retain all

fees arising from the working of the Craft, and also that the various Lodges under their jurisdiction might be permitted to elect their own Provincial Grand Master—at the same time expressing the belief that if the prayer of their petition were granted, and the Grand Lodge of England would exert its influence to induce the other Grand Lodges of Great Britain not to issue any more warrants to Lodges in Canada, that ere long the whole Craft in the Province would be united in one harmonious body.

These petitions and resolutions having elicited no reply from the Grand Lodge of England, resolutions were passed at subsequent meetings of the Provincial Grand Lodge, directing that applications be made to the Grand Lodge of England, first through the Grand Secretary—the regular channel of communication—and afterwards through the Grand Registrar, respectfully calling attention to the petitions, and begging that they might be favored with consideration and some reply. These applications appear to have been alike unavailing in procuring from the Grand Lodge of England any consideration of the claims of the Masons of Canada, for at a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge on the 19th of July last, it was officially announced that no reply had been received from the Grand Lodge of England to any of these communications.

Finding that the interest of the Craft in the Province were suffering with increased severity from the causes of which they had complained, feeling deeply the uncourteous neglect the petitions and correspondence of the Provincial Grand Lodge had experienced from the Officers of the Grand Lodge of England—and believing the Provincial Grand Lodge to be incapable of obtaining from the Grand Lodge of England those concessions which the position of the Craft render indispensable—a very large majority of the members of the Provincial Grand Lodge were desirous of calling a meeting of all the Canadian Lodges, for the purpose of deciding on and adopting the correct constitutional course for securing that relief which the circumstances of their case demanded.

Several resolutions having that object in view were proposed, but the Right Worshipful Deputy Provincial Grand Master (presiding) ruled them out of order, and refused to submit them to the meeting, adjourning the Provincial Grand Lodge until the next day.

In consequence of the refusal of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master to take the opinion of the Lodge on any of the resolutions proposed, a numerous meeting of members of the Provincial Grand Lodge, including several Provincial Grand Officers, was held after the adjournment, of the Provincial Grand Lodge, and after considering the unsatisfactory position and prospects of the craft, and despairing of ever obtaining redress of their grievances through the intervention of the Provincial Grand Lodge, a resolution was unanimously passed calling a meeting of Delegates from all Canadian Lodges to be held in the city of Hamilton, on the 10th of October, to consider the expediency of establishing a Grand Lodge of Canada.

In conformity with that resolution, and in pursuance of a summons issued to all the Lodges in Canada, the representatives of forty-one Lodges, hailing from the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland, assembled at the Masonic Hall in the City of Hamilton on the 10th of October, A. L., 5855.

Very Worshipful Brother the Rev. F. J. Lundy, D. C. L. Provincial Grand Chaplain of Upper Canada, and Worshipful Master of the Union Lodge Grimsby, No. 494, R. E., was called upon to officiate as Chaplain during the session of the Convention.

The Convention having been inaugurated by solemn prayer,

Very Worshipful Brother C. Magill, Past Junior Grand Warden of Upper Canada, and Worshipful Master of the Barton Lodge Hamilton, No. 733, R. E., and Mayor of the City, was called upon to preside; and,

Very Worshipful Brother, T. B. Harris, Past Master of St. John's Lodge, Hamilton, No. 231, R. E., was requested to act as Secretary.

On the recommendation of a committee ap-