

Lodge intends to exercise masonic jurisdiction and authority, but I most respectfully submit, that after a Grand Lodge is once established and recognized, its existence, jurisdiction and authority, can neither be destroyed, altered, or in any degree affected by either political or governmental action.

Entertaining these views regarding our position, I can see no ground for the opinion put forward by some, that the Province of Quebec is "vacant" or "unoccupied territory." That it was *occupied* from 1855 until Confederation took place, is admitted on all sides, how then can it be said to be *unoccupied* now? Has any one been able to demonstrate why it has become to be unoccupied *since*, when it is acknowledged that it was occupied *before* Confederation? If the Grand Lodge of Canada existed in and exercised authority over the Province of Quebec, as well as Ontario, *previous to Confederation*, by what process of reasoning can it be made to appear that she only exists in and exercises authority over *one* of these Provinces *SUBSEQUENTLY* to that event? When, and to whose care has she confided the other?

Investigate this subject as carefully and closely as you may, you will, I think, be irresistibly led to this conclusion, that if the Grand Lodge of Canada exists at all, (and surely no one will deny that) its existence, jurisdiction and authority extends now over every foot of the territory claimed and conceded at its establishment in 1855, and it is to-day as much the Grand Lodge of the Masons of Quebec as it is of the Masons of Ontario; and that, therefore, *a second Grand Lodge cannot at present, be legally established in either one or other of these two Provinces.*

But, were it otherwise, are the circumstances surrounding the Masons residing in the Province of Quebec such as would render it expedient or desirable that the present Grand Lodge should be dismembered? Is their position such as would warrant them in breaking off from us and setting up for themselves? Look at the number of Lodges—scarcely 40—including those working under English authority, with in most cases a comparatively limited membership. The population consisting largely of French Canadians, especially in the country parts, forbids the possibility of any very great increase for some time to come. Add to this the further fact—that legislation in that Province will doubtless be made to accord, more or less, with the views of a powerful Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, which places Freemasons in the same category with all other secret societies, of whatever nature; conscientiously regarding all alike as unmixcd and unmitigated evils, which it is the duty of every good citizen to assist in exterminating. Under the Grand Lodge of Canada, all is secure; but, if a division took place, the Masons of Quebec would not only be shorn of the strength which their connection with the Masons of Ontario affords, but they would also be deprived of the protection which they now enjoy, and which they can only hope to enjoy while continuing to be part and parcel of the Grand Lodge of Canada. It becomes, then, every prudent brother to consider well, before attempting to effect a change, which, in my humble opinion, would not only be most detrimental to, if not wholly destructive of, the best interests of Freemasonry; but would, in all probability, place in jeopardy its very existence in this Province. Yet, it is a lamentable fact, that many brethren, without the slightest consideration or forethought, should be found willing, nay, even eager, to assist in the pursuance of such a suicidal policy.