

Grand Lodges of Quebec and Scotland.

Bro. William James Hughan, of Truro, England, is well known not only in England but in Canada, as one of the most eradite Masons living, as also one of the most clear and learned of Masonic jurists. His words, therefore, on this vexed question are worth something, and we have great pleasure in giving them publicly:—

Can nothing be done to bring about a fraternal settlement between the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Quebec? All of us who have been trying, publicly and privately, have so far failed, but surely we are not to accept the present "dead lock" as final.

To begin at the beginning! I have before me the circular of Nov. 20th, 1869, announcing the formation of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, 20th day of October, 1869, just ten years ago. It bears, amongst others, the respected signature of the M. W. Bro. Dr. J. H. Graham, who has, happily, again consented to wield the gavel of the Grand Master, notwithstanding his many years of service.

The Grand Lodge sprung into existence through the operation of the "British North American Act" of July 1st, 1867, which made the Province of Quebec as distinct from that of Ontario (formerly united as the Province of Canada, legally and Masonically) as New Brunswick from Nova Scotia. After much "heartburning" and many difficulties—in which generally Quebec was heartily supported by the Grand Lodges of the United States and elsewhere—the "Grand Lodge of Quebec has become fraternally recognized and accepted as another polished stone in the Grand Lodge arch of the world. In 1866 Nova Scotia, and in 1867 New Brunswick, had also been formed, so there were abundant reasons for the action on all sides, since which period all has gone pleasantly, locally, but not so, however, with the authorities representing the Grand Lodge of Scotland. These Grand Lodges are "flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone," and if by any means, consistent with honor, usage, and Masonic rights, the claims put forth by Quebec can be agreed to, 'the sooner the better.'

Under its rule are sixty-four Lodges, being thrice the number when first of all constituted, and all must agree that, as a Grand Lodge, Quebec has done its best to support its position with dignity and rectitude.

The claim, however, made and enforced as it has been of late, for "exclusive and undivided Masonic sovereignty in the Province of Quebec," cannot be recognized by the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, and

Scotland, because it would be unfair and injurious for any Lodges preferring to continue their allegiance to either or all of those Grand Lodges. Why should a majority of Lodges—not necessarily composing a majority of the members—have the right to coerce the remainder, and make them either join in the formation of a Grand Lodge, independent of the Grand Lodges to whom they owe their existence, or be characterised as irregular, and denied Masonic intercourse? I freely grant that the Lodges in Quebec who formed the Grand Lodge in 1869, or who have joined since, had a perfect right so to do, according to Masonic custom or usage, but I deny that the new Grand Lodge so formed had any right to demand that all Lodges (objecting to such a formation, and preferring to continue as heretofore) surrender or return their old warrants, and enter, whether they desire it or not, the new organization. I claim for our Lodges in Quebec the same freedom for those who prefer the allegiance of the Grand Lodges here as for those who have chosen the allegiance of the Grand Lodge there. Some difficulties, of course, will arise through the Lodges continuing their independence of the new Grand Lodge, and doubtless in time, by proper management, the members will elect to join the Grand Lodge of Quebec, but until they voluntarily do so I submit they are as regular and as much entitled to the fraternal support and countenance of the Grand Lodge of Quebec as the latter organization deserves recognition by other Grand Lodges.

There is a regular Grand Lodge of Egypt, recognized by the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland, but the English Lodges at Alexandria, Cairo, and Ramleh are not objected to in any way by the Egyptian Grand Lodge, and so long as they prefer allegiance here, Egypt Masonically agrees thereto.

In Nova Scotia we have 398, Halifax, hailing from England, and yet why should we not be on the best of terms with that Grand Lodge? For a similar reason we have certainly the right to claim fraternal consideration from Quebec on behalf of our English and Scottish Lodges at Montreal and St. John's, which were chartered before the Grand Lodge of Quebec was constituted.

I cannot, however, defend the action of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in granting warrants for 622 and 625, Montreal, after Quebec had regularly formed its own Grand Lodge, for it is this action which has so embittered the feeling between the two Grand Lodges. England and Quebec Masonically are on a firm footing, and if only Quebec would be content to wait until our Lodges desire to transfer their allegiance, or if they never do, be ready to acknow-