

The rule restricting members to one speech is in accordance with the general principles of parliamentary law, and is founded on the very natural doctrine, that a fair discussion implies the right of every one to express his sentiments. But as this can be done in a single speech, a second one is prohibited, lest the speaker should become tedious by needless repetition, the discussion be inordinately prolonged, and the time of the assembly be unnecessarily wasted.

Some Lodges, however, are more liberal on this point, and, by a special by-law, permit each member to speak twice on the same subject; and such a rule would, of course, override the parliamentary law; but where no such by-law exists, the parliamentary law would come into operation, and must be rigidly enforced.

To this law there are two exceptions, which must now be noted :

FIRST. Any member in a parliamentary body—that is, a body governed strictly by parliamentary usage—is permitted to speak a second time, and even oftener, by the consent of the assembly; but as this second speaking is actually a breach of the rules of order, which rules of order are on that point and for that occasion suspended or overruled, to enable the member to speak a second time, and as the decision of all questions of order in a masonic Lodge are vested not in the Lodge, but in the Master, the power of granting this consent is, in Masonry, transferred from the Lodge to the presiding officer. Hence, in the application of the parliamentary law on this subject to masonic bodies, we must make this distinction. By the parliamentary law no person is permitted to speak more than once on the same subject, except with the consent of the assembly. In a masonic Lodge no brother is permitted to speak more than once on the same subject, except with the consent of the presiding officer.

SECONDLY. The right of speaking twice is always given to the mover of the resolution, who, if he desires it, may close the debate; after which it would be out of order for any other member to speak. Parliamentary jurists are in doubt whether this privilege exists as a matter of right, or simply by the courtesy of the assembly. But that it does exist, and that it is constantly exerted, and has always been unquestionably recognized, is, in our opinion, sufficient to make it a matter of right by the law of precedent. This privilege is acceded to the mover, not only on a principle of justice to himself, but of expediency to the assembly. It is to be presumed that the mover of a resolution must know more of the subject-matter which it embraces, or at least that he is better acquainted with the reasons which he thinks should induce the adoption of the proposition than any other member. He ought, therefore, to be permitted, for his own justification, as well as for the information of his fellow-members, to reply to any arguments which have been made by its adversaries in the course of the debate, or to correct what he may deem any misstatements of facts by the opponents of the measure. But to accomplish these objects, it is necessary that he should confine himself to the arguments which have been advanced, or the statements which have been made. His reply must be what a reply actually means, namely, that which is said in answer to what has been said by another, and nothing more. He can enter into no new field of argument, nor introduce any new topics which have not been touched upon by the previous discussion. If he does, his speech ceases to be a refutation of the arguments of his opponents, and the new arguments introduced by him in his second speech give them in turn the right to a