

New South Wales lack of courtesy on the part of Scotland

At the meeting in December, M. E. Comp. Hamilton had to again complain of lack of courtesy on the part of Scotland in not replying to their communication of a year previously. The Supreme Committee at Edinburgh, however, dealing with a report sent to Grand Chapter by its provincial representative in New South Wales, incidentally referred to the matter stating that the members of the New South Wales Grand Chapter

"Seem now to be taking up the position that mutual intercourse is impossible unless the Sovereign rights of the Scottish Supreme Grand Chapter are ceded to them, and unless the latter are prepared to agree that two or more Sovereign bodies cannot co-exist in the territory, a proposition which, looking to Masonic precedent in other parts of the British Empire, and taking into account the difference of working and of degrees under the several jurisdictions, the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland naturally finds it impossible to admit."

The Grand First Principal pointed out that the gentle implication that the New South Wales claim was of recent date was contrary to fact. From first to last the request had been for recognition as the Sovereign Body in N. S. W. The request made to the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland in October, 1889, was made in the same words and at the same time to the Grand Chapters of England and Ireland, those bodies and all the Grand Chapters of the world except the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland at once recognized the Grand Chapter of New South Wales as the one and only Sovereign Body in Royal Arch Masonry in that territory and never up to the issuance of the Scottish statement as above had the request been treated by the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland as a request for anything else.

From the standpoint of the Grand Chapters of the Dominion of Canada the action, or rather non-action, of Scotland is inexplicable. There may come a time, and perhaps not very far distant, when some Grand Chapter in sympathy with the position of the New South Wales Companions will put the direct question to Scotland, for it must not be overlooked that Scotland's deaf ear has been turned to the just request of New South Wales for twenty-five years, and in all that long period, and while the present conditions last, is free to establish new Chapters under its own control, and in utter disregard of the principle which every other Grand Chapter in the world recognizes but herself, so far as these Australian bodies are concerned.

But as the Grand First Principal suggests, the remedy lies with the Scottish Chapters which continue to bear allegiance to the distant but "dour auld mither" across the seas.

"I agree with the Grand First Principal of Western Australia that we are apt to make too much of the question of recognition by Scotland, that is to say too much so far as Royal Arch Masonry is concerned, but there is a much greater and really important issue involved, and that is the very grave danger that the present want of harmony in R. A. Masonry may spread and grow into open discord in Masonry generally.

"This is no crying of 'Wolf!' Already I know of Craft Lodges in which the question has engendered bitter feeling, and the end is not yet.

"I venture to think we might well leave the Grand Chapter of Scotland alone, and look for a solution of the matter to our Companions of that Constitution here. I am sure they appreciate the disadvantages and dangers, not to say disgrace, to Masonry of the present position, and I believe they are patriotic enough to recognize that it is highly desirable that R. A. Masonry should be under one local Sovereign Body."

Sources:

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1913 report on Foreign Correspondence – NEW SOUTH WALES