

## Protection against clandestine or irregular Masons

"All that is asked of the Grand Secretary" is to do something the Grand Secretary has no right to do. If the Grand Secretary is courteously asked a question he should as courteously answer it, but the Grand Secretary's autograph and the seal of which he is the custodian are limited to certain defined purposes, and he certainly is not authorized to interfere with a document issued by a private Chapter, constitutionally approved, under its own seal and the signatures of its officers, the ruling of Michigan's Grand High Priest to the contrary. There is something after all in the old saying, "he who rules least rules best."

In this connection the views of a writer in a recent issue of the Tyler-Keystone, a high-class Masonic journal published in Michigan, by the way, will not be considered malapropos:

"Much new legislation enacted has been under the general head of protection against 'clandestine' or irregular Masons. Several Grand Lodges have joined hands with those who make documentary evidence of membership a necessary preliminary to examination. Whatever may be the danger from 'clandestines,' to our mind the danger of this over-solicitation on our behalf is much greater. Traveling Masons have lost faith in the strength of the Masonic bonds. Their knowledge no longer serves to make them a part of the Masonic family, and as a consequence their trust in the Craft is shattered, their feeling of security wherever they may be is gone, and the incentive to continue their membership is in many cases destroyed.

"The distrust and suspicion which has grown out of this anti-clandestine legislation is unwholesome and un-Masonic. It marks a phase of Masonry which is largely built up on commercialism. The legislation which makes clandestinism necessary or possible is a result of financial and numerical greed, which we call by courtesy the 'doctrine of sole jurisdiction.' "

### **Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1912 report on Foreign Correspondence - MICHIGAN