

Universal rule re exclusive jurisdiction

He took up the attitude of the Grand Chapter of Scotland towards the Grand Chapters of New South Wales, Western Australia and New Zealand.

"A universal rule and principle of Freemasonry, accepted and regarded everywhere except by the Grand Chapter of Scotland, is, that where there is a Grand Body of any particular Rite, as to that Rite, it has, after its lawful, regular organization, exclusive jurisdiction over the particular State, Territory or District where located; and that two Masonic Grand Bodies of the same Rite cannot occupy, have jurisdiction over, and constitute subordinates in the same territory, except in a State or Province, etc., where there is no such Grand Body ; yet Scotland persists in violating this well-known principle of Masonry."

He admitted Scotland's right to her own subordinate Chapters established before the formation of the Grand bodies, but objected strongly to her claim to divided sovereignty in the same jurisdiction.

"There is, and can be, I think, no doubt that each and all of these Grand Chapters have been lawfully and regularly organized in accordance with the established customs in that regard, and most of the Grand Bodies in this country have fraternally recognized them."

"Should we put aside for the time all other matters mentioned, I do not think it either consistent or Masonic that we should recognize and retain fraternal relations with both Scotland and New South Wales, when both Grand Bodies are claiming jurisdiction over, and chartering and constituting Chapters in, a territory directly and immediately covered by one of them. We could, with as much propriety, continue our relations with another Grand Chapter that assumed to come into Texas and constitute Chapters of Royal Arch Masons.

"In her general principles, Masonry is world-wide, and her votaries throughout the land a band of brothers united in a common cause, and her landmarks and recognized rules should bind everywhere.

"There is no question in my mind that the fault lies with the Grand Chapter of Scotland, and years of fraternal effort have failed to alter, change or amend her un-Masonic course.

"I have, therefore, to recommend that the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas renounce and discontinue her fraternal relations with the 'Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland,' and forbid Masonic intercourse between members of Chapters under our jurisdiction and members of Chapters owing obedience to the said Grand Chapter of Scotland, until such time as that Grand Body shall purge itself of its aforesaid un-Masonic conduct, and that our Grand Secretary be instructed to notify the Grand Chapter of Scotland of the action taken by this Grand Chapter."

At a later stage of the proceedings the Correspondence Committee, to which had been referred the foregoing, reported that it had carefully considered the situation as set forth by the Grand High Priest, and as much as it deplored the necessity of such action, felt that "patience has ceased to be a virtue," and that, in order to maintain and preserve the broad, salutary and time-honored principles of Masonic courtesy and universal fraternalism so thoroughly embodied in the laws and teachings of the Royal Craft, and which are so necessary to produce harmony among the Craft, could see no just course open now "except the one pointed out by our Grand High Priest, who is noted for conservatism, and who is so well posted as to the rights and duties of Grand Royal Arch Bodies," and offered the following:

"That the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas renounce and discontinue her fraternal relations with the 'Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland,' and forbid Royal Arch Masonic intercourse between members of Chapters under our jurisdiction and of Chapters owing obedience to said Grand Chapter of Scotland until such time as that Grand Body shall purge itself of its conduct in invading the jurisdictions of other Grand Bodies, and in refusing to recognize such Grand Bodies on the conditions that the rights of Scotland to continue to establish subordinate Chapters within the confines of such jurisdictions shall be reserved; and that our Grand Secretary be instructed to notify the Grand Chapter of Scotland of the action taken by this Grand Chapter."

It remains to be seen if the ball kicked off by Texas will be assisted towards the objective goal by others who have hitherto only expressed an opinion. Scotland's position, to the transatlantic view, is untenable by reason of her claim

to equal sovereignty, a claim indefensible from any standpoint except that of being earlier in the field but not in sole possession. If the English and Irish Chapters are districted under respective Grand Superintendents in like manner, then the parent Grand bodies have the same right to make a similar claim to Scotland. Then what a chaotic condition would ensue. To avoid a Capitular Armageddon, Scotland will, it is hoped, fall into line, and thus the well-intended action of Texas will have attained its end.

It does, however, seem odd to this Canadian that none of the Grand Chapters immediately affected has worked up courage to do what Texas has done in their behalf. And it is within the possibilities that the latter may find itself in the position of the individual who chivalrously interfered to allay a marital difference of opinion, and too late wished he had not parted with that "virtue" that would have saved him a few aching bones and a scratched face.

**Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1915 report on Foreign Correspondence - TEXAS