

The Book of Constitution of The Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario

When the Grand Lodge of Canada was formed in 1855, the first action taken was to appoint a Committee to draft a Constitution. Its purpose was precisely and succinctly for the stated in the Preamble:

- 1) In order to form perfect fraternal union;
- 2) To establish order;
- 3) To insure tranquility;
- 4) To provide for and promote the general welfare of the Craft;
- 5) And to secure to the fraternity in the Province of Ontario.

During the succeeding years, this document has been amended to address the evolving culture of the fraternity, always with the consent of the Brethren assembled at the Annual Communication. As such the Constitution is the compilation of judicious decisions made to address those circumstances “*to establish order and to ensure tranquility*” among the Brethren. An amendment to the Constitution must be for the benefit of the whole fraternity – never self-serving for an individual, a lodge, or district. So important is this document considered that a personal copy is placed in the hands of every initiate. (Do you know where your copy of the Constitution is?)

Among the foremost rights and privileges of a Freemason is the **Ballot** for the admission of candidates either by Initiation or Affiliation – by common consent, it is one of the Ancient Landmarks. The procedure is outlined in Sections 335 – 368. While much of this deals with process, there remains a much more profound responsibility that rests upon each and every member of the lodge: “*to vote for the good of the Order*” as his conscience dictates.

On the other hand, this is not to imply that the Ballot is merely a formality or ‘rubber stamp.’ In those instances where there is genuine concern about the suitability of an applicant, that concern should be communicated in confidence directly to the Worshipful Master. “*The Master shall not initiate or advance any candidate whom he knows or believes to be unworthy.*” **Section 244**

The right and privilege of the Ballot must never be abused or misused. **It is not the place to settle private piques and quarrels.** There is no excuse for vindictive behaviour in any form in a fraternity that professes Brotherly Love as the first of its basic principles. **Section 295** empowers the Worshipful Master to order any Brother behaving “*in such a manner as to disturb the harmony of the lodge*” to leave the lodge and, “*if he disobeys such order, may suspend him until the next regular meeting of the lodge.*” When differences arise among the Brethren, The Apron Charge in the First

Degree gives specific instructions to be followed in the amicable resolution of those differences. If a flagrant misuse of the Ballot is apparent, as a last resort, **Sections 409 – 410** dealing with Masonic Conduct, may be invoked through application to the Grand Secretary.

In summary: *“The chief need of Freemasonry is not to advance the moral standard of Freemasonry, but to bring the morals of Freemasons up to the moral standard of Freemasonry.”* Tyler-Keystone, 1923

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