

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

R. W. BRO. DEWOLF SMITH

on the Occasion of the Celebration of the Fiftieth
Anniversary of the Introduction of Freemasonry
into the Province of British Columbia

VICTORIA, B. C.

14th DECEMBER, 1909

Most Worshipful Grand Master and Brethren :—

In giving a short account of the progress of Freemasonry in British Columbia I have not thought it necessary to deal with the history of the mother Grand Lodges—those of England and Scotland. That is, I have no doubt, sufficiently familiar to all of you.

Just how Freemasonry was introduced into the Province it is not easy to say. Leaving out of account the visits of the earlier explorers and discoverers, the first permanent settlement appears to have been that of Victoria, which was founded in 1843, when it was considered advisable by the Hudson's Bay Company to establish a headquarters on what would probably be British territory—the fixing of the boundary between the United States and the British possessions being a burning question about that time.

Early in the year mentioned, then, we find that Chief Factor Douglas with a number of employees of the Hudson's Bay Company left Fort Vancouver, Washington—or Oregon—and located at Victoria, erecting there a fort and other necessary buildings. His company numbered about fifty, and it is possible that some of them were Freemasons, having been made either in Great Britain or in the eastern States or Canada. Shortly afterwards, too, (in 1846) ships began to arrive at Victoria from England, no doubt bringing occasional additions to the colony, and in 1850 a party of eighty immigrants arrived.

Among all these there were probably some Freemasons, but the first public mention of the Craft that I have been able to find is in "The British Colonist" of the 24th of June, 1859, when mention is made of the fact that the Grand Lodge of Oregon, which had been organized in 1851, had held its annual communication on the 11th of that month at Eugene.

No further mention of Freemasonry is found in the public journals until the 3rd of August in the same year, when it is stated that the Grand Lodge of Scotland had extended recognition to the newly formed Grand Lodge of Canada.

The editor of "The British Colonist" was [Amor DeCosmos](#), who was already a Freemason, which would account for the appearance of these items.

The first gathering of Freemasons in British Columbia of which we have any record was held on the 6th of September, 1859. It was an informal meeting, held for the purpose of arranging for the funeral of Brother Samuel J. Hazeltine. Brother Hazeltine was Chief Engineer of the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *Labouchere*, and on the 26th of August,

1859, had the misfortune to break his leg. He was removed to the Royal Hospital, Victoria, and died there.

As a result of the meeting referred to, the following notice appeared in "The British Colonist" of the 7th of September, 1859 :—

"Masonic Notice.

At an informal meeting of Free and Accepted Masons held this day, it was *Resolved*, That all Master Masons in good standing, attached to the Navy, Army or Civil Departments of Her Majesty, or of the U. S. Navy, now sojourning in this colony, be invited to participate in the obsequies of our deceased Brother SAMUEL J. HAZELTINE, meeting for that purpose at the Hall of the Royal Hotel tomorrow.

Brethren in good standing, resident or sojourning on the Island, are fraternally invited to attend. By order,

B. F. Moses,
Secretary pro tem.

John T. Damon
Acting W. M.

Victoria, V. I. Sept. 6th, 1859."

The meeting was accordingly held in the Royal Hotel, which was situated near the corner of Wharf and Johnson streets. A large number of the Craft attended the meeting; several California Masons vouched for each other and formed committees for the examination of others. When this had been done, the Brethren exercised their ancient prerogative and formed themselves into a Lodge and officers were chosen. Brother John T. Damon was elected acting Worshipful Master and Brother B. F. Moses Acting Secretary.

The following day the Craft again assembled, and being properly clothed in white gloves and aprons (the aprons having been made by a tent maker on Yates street) formed a procession and marched to the Hospital and thence to the Cemetery beyond Christ Church, where all that was mortal of the late Brother Hazeltine was interred with Masonic honours.

Unfortunately there is no record preserved of the names of those who were present on this interesting occasion, and the only mention of the event is the following paragraph in "The British Colonist" of the 9th of September, 1859.

"MASONIC FUNERAL.—The remains of the late Mr. Samuel Hazeltine, whose sudden death has been generally deplored, were followed to the grave, on Wednesday, by many friends and a large number of Masons, of which Order he was a member. He was buried by the Masonic fraternity."

Although this is the first recorded meeting of the Craft others must have been held previously, as the warrant for the formation of Victoria Lodge was granted by the M. W. Grand Master of England, who, at the time, was the Earl of Zetland, on the 19th of March, 1859. Events moved slowly in those days, however, and it was not until a year later, apparently, that the Warrant arrived in the colony. On the 20th of March, 1860, the following notice appeared in "The British Colonist":

"VICTORIA LODGE, No. 1085.— Our Masonic Brethren will be pleased to learn that the Charter applied for to the Grand Lodge of England has arrived and

is now in possession of J. J. Southgate, Esqr. Arrangements are in progress to speedily organize the Lodge in 'due and ancient form,' of which the Brethren will have 'due and timely notice.'"

It took some time to complete the arrangements, apparently, for it was not until the 28th of the following August that the Lodge was organized. On that date a meeting was held in a hall over [Hibben and Coswell's](#) store on the corner of Yates and Langley streets, the following members being present :—

James Johnson Southgate.....	Merchant
George Pearkes.....	Solicitor
James N. Thain.....	Merchant
Amor DeCosmos.....	Editor
Kady Gambitz.....	Draper
Thomas Harris.....	Gentleman
Lumley Franklin.....	Broker
John T. Howard.....	Publican
William Henry Thain.....	Carrier
H. J. McDonell.....	

Past Masters [Robert Burnaby](#) and Henry Aguillar acted as installing officers, and Bro. Richard Lewis officiated as Tyler .

The Lodge was duly constituted as [Victoria Lodge No. 1085](#) on the Grand Registry of England, and the following officers were installed :

Bro. J. J. Southgate	W. M .
" Geo. Pearkes.....	S. W.
" W. Jeffray.....	J. W.
" J. Thain.....	Treasurer
" A. DeCosmos	Secretary
" W. H. Thain.....	S. D .
" K. Gambitz	J. D .
" L. Franklin.....	I. G .
" R. J. McDonell.....	Tyler

The Senior Deacon, Brother W. H. Thain, was installed by proxy, Brother Thomas Harris being installed for him. It will be noticed that the name of the Junior Warden, Brother W. Jeffray, does not appear in the list of charter members although he was evidently present, having been installed and having taken part in the proceedings of the meeting.

The regular meetings were fixed for the last Thursday of each month, and this was apparently adhered to for some time, but early in the history of the Lodge the regular meetings were held occasionally on the third Thursday, and sometimes on the second Thursday of the month.

At the first regular meeting petitions for initiation were received from Messrs. Thomas A. McCann and John Malowschyk, the latter name being also spelt Malowansky and Malawanskyh. The last-named gentleman enjoys the honour of having been the first person initiated into Freemasonry in British Columbia.

It cost something to organize a Lodge in those days, for at one of the first meetings it was reported that the indebtedness of the Lodge was \$1,480.50, while the funds on hand amounted to £ 27.18.4.

It was resolved to apply the money on hand to the reduction of the debt, and the Secretary was given the privilege of giving his note for the balance—bearing interest at one and a half *per cent.* per month.

The regular and annual meeting of the Lodge was held on the 27th of December, 1860, when a visit was received from the Grand Master of Washington Territory, M. W. Brother E. Garfield. The officers, that is, the Master, Treasurer and Tyler, were elected for the ensuing year, and the day was celebrated by a grand Ball in the evening. The Ball was held in the Court House, James' Bay, and according to "The British Colonist" the company present was large and highly respectable. "His Excellency Governor Douglas and the Grand Master of Washington Territory honoured the occasion with their presence, and the varied regalia of the Fraternity, combined with the uniforms of the gallant representatives of the Royal Navy, and all set off with the beauty and charms of the fair sex, presented a picture of enjoyment, whilst whirling to the giddy waltz, that could not well be surpassed." About the time that these events were taking place in Victoria gold was discovered on the Thompson and Fraser Rivers, while previously coal had been found at Nanaimo. This caused settlements to be established at Nanaimo, at Fort Yale and at Fort Langley, the last mentioned being the metropolis of the mainland, although the town was soon afterwards moved to New Westminster, which became the seat of government of the Colony. Cariboo also shared in the excitement and attracted a large number of men.

It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that shortly after the establishment of Victoria Lodge a second Lodge should have been organized, and this time at New Westminster. A meeting to organize a Lodge was held at New Westminster during the winter of 1860 at which were present Brothers

Henry Holbrook,
Dr. Seddall, of the Royal Engineers,
Peacock, clerk to Bro. Holbrook,
Frye, of the Customs,
Hickey, constable,
Levi, storekeeper,
Boos, Levi's partner, and
William Stewart.

It was agreed to ask for a Warrant of Constitution from the Grand Master of England, and because the petitioners came from different Jurisdictions, it was decided to call it the [Union Lodge](#).

Brother Holbrook was nominated as the first Worshipful Master, Brother Seddall the first Senior Warden, and Brother Peacock the first Junior Warden. The petition was sent to England, but the Warrant was refused because, according to the English Constitution the first office-bearers must be registered in the books of the Grand Lodge of England and Brother Peacock was a Scotch Mason. Subsequently some of the members of Victoria Lodge, whose names cannot be learnt, signed the petition and a new Junior Warden was

chosen, the result being that a Warrant was granted bearing the date of the 16th of December, 1861, and the number 1201.

Unfortunately, the earlier records of Union Lodge were lost in a fire which occurred in 1886, and the details of its organization and early proceedings are wanting.

The gold excitement, and perhaps other reasons, drew a number of Americans to Victoria, and among them naturally a number of Freemasons.

These, being unacquainted with the work practiced by Victoria Lodge, desired to organize one which would use the American work, and proposed to apply, if they did not actually apply, to the Grand Lodge of Washington for a dispensation. This did not suit the Brethren of Victoria Lodge, who held that as this was a British Colony it was a close preserve for the use of the British Grand Lodges, and on the 24th of January, 1861, the Lodge passed the following resolution:—

Whereas, we have been informed that a party in this community have applied to the Grand Lodge of Washington Territory for a Dispensation or Warrant to organize a Lodge of F. & A. M. in this town, it is, therefore,

RESOLVED, That while we hail the Grand Lodge of Washington Territory and all other Grand Lodges as Brethren and Masons, we do not recognize their power to grant Dispensations or Warrants out of the district of their own country, and all Dispensations and Warrants emanating from any other source than the Grand Lodges of the mother country in this place and we shall hold as clandestine, and all Masons visiting such Lodges cannot be recognized as Masons.

This discouraged the applicants and the petition was withdrawn, but shortly afterwards a number of Brethren decided to apply to the Grand Lodge of Scotland for a Warrant and asked Victoria Lodge to recommend their petition. The request was received by Victoria Lodge on the 15th of May, 1862, and was granted, the Brethren being careful, however, to preserve the precedence of the Grand Lodge of England, as may be seen by the tenor of the following resolution:—

That the Victoria Lodge No. 1085 cordially responds to the petition of the Brethren desirous to establish a Lodge under the Grand Lodge of Scotland; but in doing so, they reserve the precedence of the Grand Lodge of England in general Masonic affairs within the colony, and they communicate this resolution to the Grand Lodge of England as a matter of record.

In due course a Warrant was granted, dated [sic] and on the 20th of October, 1862, a meeting was held in the Hall of Victoria Lodge to organize the new Lodge, which was known as Vancouver Lodge No. 421 on the Scotch Registry. The charter members present at this meeting were:

Brothers William Jeffery,
Sam Goldstone,
J. R. Stewart,
A. Scorgie,
A. Blackman,

T. S. Allett,
Morris Meyer, and
R. J . McDonnell .

The first officers of the Lodge were

Brother Wm. JefferyR.W. Master
S. GoldstoneSenior Warden
Alex. CainJunior Warden

The last-named being absent, was installed by proxy.

Some years then elapsed before a fourth Lodge was organized. Some time during the year 1865 a meeting of Masons was held at Nanaimo, the names of those present being unknown. It was decided, however, that a petition for a Warrant for a Lodge to be held at Nanaimo should be sent to the Grand Master of England, which was done. The Warrant was expected from England in the spring of 1866, and as there was no suitable hall in the town, a house was rented at twenty-five dollars a month. The building was altered to adapt it to Masonic purposes and the necessary furniture was procured. Considerable delay occurred, the Warrant having been lost with the steamer carrying the mails between San Francisco and Victoria. A duplicate was sent for and eventually reached the colony in the spring of 1867. The meeting for organizing the Lodge was held on the 15th of May, 1867, and was attended by the following charter members:—

Brothers William H. Franklyn,
Daniel Pender,
Edward Beverley Bogg,
James Stanford Smith,
Robert William Carral,
Alexander Mayer,
Daniel Frew, and
James Miller Brown.

The constitution of Nanaimo Lodge was attended with considerable ceremony. An emergent meeting of Victoria Lodge was held on the 13th of May, at which the Worshipful Master, W. Brother Richard Lewis, stated that by virtue of a dispensation from the Grand Master he was empowered to authorize the Brethren to proceed to Nanaimo in regalia for the purpose of constituting the new Lodge. They accordingly embarked on the steamer "Sir James Douglas" with several members of Vancouver Lodge, and accompanied by the band of the volunteer militia. The members of the new Lodge and the visitors from Victoria assembled on the morning of the 15th, W. Brother Holbrook, of Union Lodge, also being present. Probably because Brother Holbrook had held an office in one of the Provincial Grand Lodges of England, he was requested to take charge of the proceedings, which he did, and the Lodge was duly constituted as [Nanaimo Lodge, No. 1090](#).

The low number of Nanaimo Lodge is explained by the fact that shortly before this the Grand Lodge of England renumbered its Lodges, in consequence of which Victoria Lodge, which was 1085, became No. 783, and Union Lodge, formerly No. 1201, became No. 899.

Next year, 1867, another Lodge was warranted in Victoria by the Grand Lodge of England under the name of British Columbia Lodge and the number 1187, the date of its Warrant being 26th of July, 1867.

In this year, 1867, the Grand Master Mason of Scotland appointed a Provincial Grand Master for the Colony, the Brother selected for that honour being [W. Brother I. W. Powell](#). Unfortunately the minutes of the Provincial Grand Lodge are not available, the only record of its meetings that I have been able to find being a small leaflet, for which I am under obligations to M. W. Brother Powell. His commission was dated 6th of May, 1867, but it was not until December of that year that he called the representatives of his Lodges together and organized the Provincial Grand Lodge. This meeting was held on the 24th of December, 1867, and there were present besides R. W. Brother Powell,

Brothers N. I. Neustadt,
 E. C. Holden,
 M. W. Waitt,
 A. C. Campbell,
 A. G. Richardson,
 Rev. Thos. Somerville,
 R. H. Adams,
 J. E. Hunt,
 P. J. Hall,
 J. R. Stewart,
 H. B. W. Aikman,

and perhaps others.

After the Provincial Grand Lodge had been called to order the Provincial Grand Master addressed the Brethren briefly, stating that he had already granted dispensations for the formation of two Lodges—[Cariboo](#), at Barkersville [*sic*], subsequently warranted as No. 469, and [Caledonia](#), at Nanaimo, which afterwards obtained a warrant numbered 478.

The Provincial Grand Master then proceeded to invest his officers, who were as follows:—

R. W. Bro.	Norton I. Neustadt..	Provincial Deputy Grand Master
W. "	R. H. Adams.....	Provincial Senior Grand Warden
" "	J. J. Hunt	Provincial Junior Grand Warden
" "	J. R. Stewart	Provincial Grand Treasurer
" "	A. G. Richardson	Provincial Grand Secretary
" "	Rev. T. Somerville	Provincial Grand Chaplain
" "	A. C. Campbell	Provincial Senior Grand Deacon
" "	E. C. Holden.....	Provincial Junior Grand Deacon
" "	H. B. W. Aikman	Provincial Grand Sword Bearer
" "	P. J. Hall	Provincial Grand Tyler

The Brethren of the English Constitution had, at an early date in their history endeavoured to secure the appointment of a District Grand Master, and at various times had passed resolutions and had sent petitions to the Grand Lodge of England urging such appointment. For some time, however, the Grand Master of England hesitated to grant the

request. The reason at first given was that no District Grand Master would be appointed until there were at least three Lodges in the Colony working under the English Constitution. This difficulty was removed early in 1866 when Nanaimo Lodge was warranted. In July, 1867, British Columbia Lodge was warranted, making the number of English Lodges four, but still no patent was granted. Shortly before that date, however, the Grand Master Mason of Scotland had as already mentioned, appointed a Provincial Grand Master for the Colony, and the Grand Lodge of England may have feared that the precedence so carefully reserved by Victoria Lodge was in danger of being lost, for in the fall of 1867 a patent dated 10th of September, 1867 was issued to W. Brother Robert Burnaby, appointing him District Grand Master for the Colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island.

Although dated as above it is probable that the patent was not received by Brother Burnaby until early in 1868 as it was not until the spring of that year that he communicated the fact that he had received the patent to several Brethren. A meeting was held at his residence on the 14th of March, 1868, to make the preliminary arrangements for the formation of a District Grand Lodge, the following Brethren being present:

Robert Burnaby,
[Henry Holbrook](#),
 W. Clark,
 J. Cooper,
 Lumley Franklin,
 George Pearkes, and
 Robert Plummer, Jr .

The District Grand Master stated that he had nominated the following Brethren as officers of the District Grand Lodge, all of whom had signified their willingness to accept officers, viz:

W. Bro.	H. Holbrook, P.M. Lodge No. 890	Deputy District Grand Master
" "	J. F. McCreight , W.M. Lodge No. 783.....	Sr. District Grand Warden
" "	W. H. Smith, W.M. Lodge No. 899	Jr. District Grand Warden
" "	Rev. F. P. Gribble, M.M. Lodge No. 1187,	District Grand Chaplain
" "	G. Pearkes, P.M. Lodge No. 783.....	District Grand Registrar
" "	R. Plummer, Jr. Dir. Cer. Lodge No. 783.....	District Grand Secretary
W. "	W. W. Clark, W.M. Lodge No. 1090	District Grand S. D.
" "	T. Harris, W.M. Lodge No. 1187	District Grand J. D.
" "	R. Lewis, P.M. Lodge No. 783	District Grand Supt. of W.
" "	L. Franklin, P.M. Lodge No. 783	District Grand Dir. of Cer.
" "	W. Beck, P.M. Lodge No. J	District Grand Swd. Bearer
" "	P. Medana , Organist Lodge No. 783	District Grand Organist
" "	J. Blackbourne, S.W. Lodge No 783	District Grand Pursuivant
W. "	W. J . Cooper, P.M. Lodge No. 899	District Grand Steward
" "	W. H. Franklyn, P.M. Lodge No. 1090	District Grand Steward
" "	G. Creighton, S.D. Lodge No. 1187.....	District Grand Tyler

It will be noticed that the District Grand Lodge was organized on a much more pretentious basis than the Provincial Grand Lodge, while the "social side of Masonry" was

not neglected, for the record states that “the health of each Brother present was drunk as his name was mentioned,” and each returned thanks for the honour done him and promised to do all in his power to advance the interests of the Craft. Then that there might be no cause for jealousy, the healths of the absent officers were also drunk.

The Provincial and District Grand Lodges being now in working order, matters proceeded smoothly enough, the Provincial and District Grand Masters being warm personal friends and each being imbued with an earnest desire to promote the welfare of the Craft in general.

The only thing that occurred to mar the harmony existing between the two Jurisdictions was a complaint made by certain Lodges in Victoria that material rejected by them had been accepted by Lodges of the other Jurisdiction. This, however, was strongly denied by the Lodges concerned, and apparently the denial was accepted.

A fourth Lodge under the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed by dispensation of the Provincial Grand Master—[Mount Hermon Lodge](#), which was organized at Hastings in January, 1869. One other dispensation for a new Lodge was issued by the Provincial Grand Master for Scotland—that for [Quadra Lodge](#)—but no new Lodge was formed under the English Constitution.

The petitioners for the Warrant for [Quadra Lodge](#) were :

Brother James Grahame	R. W. M.
" Geo. Grant	S. W.
" W. Frazer	J. W.
" Otis Parsons	Treasurer
" H. F. Heisterman	Secretary
" F. H. Lamb.....	S. D.
" C. Strouss.....	J. D.
" A. Astrico.....	I. G.
" P. J. Hall	Tyler

together with Brothers I. W. Powell, Kriemler and H. B. W. Aikman.

After some preliminary meetings the Brethren were called together on the 7th of January, 1871, when the Lodge was constituted and the officers installed by R. W. Brother I.W. Powell.

The Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Scotland probably arrived in due course, but it is doubtful whether the Lodge ever worked under it.

It could not have arrived until late in the year, and by that time the formation of an independent Grand Lodge was being proceeded with.

The minutes of the Lodge up to and including those of the 1st of December, 1871, are headed “[Quadra Lodge No. — of Scottish Free Masons in the Province of British Columbia.](#)” While following the minutes of this meeting is a “Return of Intrans” pasted in the Minute Book, in which the number of the Lodge is given as 508. The next meeting, a regular meeting held on the 8th of December, 1871 has its minutes headed “[Quadra Lodge No. 8 on the Registry of British Columbia.](#)” I infer from this that the Warrant arrived shortly before the formation of the new Grand Lodge—evidently after the convention to

organize the new Grand Lodge had been held, while the numbers of the various Lodges taking part were probably discussed and allotted at this convention, which would account for the Lodge attaching the number 8 to the minutes some two or three weeks before the Grand Lodge was actually organized.

Thus there were, early in 1871, four Lodges under the English Constitution and five under the Scottish, governed by a District Grand Lodge of England and a Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland. At the head of the District Grand Lodge was R. W. Brother Robert Burnaby, and under him were the Lodges Victoria, No. 783, Union, No. 899, Nanaimo, No. 1090, and British Columbia, No. 1187.

Over the Provincial Grand Lodge R. W. Brother I. W. Powell presided, and the Lodges in his charge were Vancouver, No. 421, Cariboo, No. 469, Caledonia, No. 478, Mount Hermon, No. 491, and Quadra, (u. d.) No. 508.

Some time before this a movement to organize an independent Grand Lodge for the colony had been started, Vancouver Lodge apparently taking the lead. On the 16th of December, 1868, a regular meeting of that Lodge was held, there being present thirty members of the Lodge and seven visitors, three of whom were from Cariboo Lodge and one from Union. A series of resolutions, too long to be given here, was introduced, the mover, W. Bro. R. H. Adams, stating that he would bring them up for action at a subsequent meeting. Briefly, they recite the condition of Freemasonry as it then existed in the colony; the difficulties that continually occurred because of the distance from the parent Grand Lodges and the long delays in correspondence; and the desirability of, and the advantage to be secured by the formation of an independent Grand Lodge. These resolutions were accordingly brought up at a meeting of the Lodge held on the 2nd of January, 1869, and were adopted. They were forthwith communicated to the other Lodges in the Colony, with a suggestion that each Lodge appoint a committee to confer with a committee from Vancouver Lodge as to the best mode of carrying them into effect. They were variously received. Most of the Scotch Lodges at once fell in with the proposal and appointed delegates, Caledonia Lodge refusing. The English Lodges, on the other hand, declined to entertain the proposition, with the exception of Victoria Lodge, which sent them to the District Grand Master with the request that he lay them before the Grand Lodge of England. This he did in a letter remarkable for its temperate and impartial statement of the case, addressed to the Grand Secretary of England, who was at the time V.W. Brother John Hervey. The letter received by the District Grand Master in reply expressed the regret of the Grand Secretary that the Brethren in the colony should do anything which might tend to lessen the influence they possessed as members of the English Constitution, and the fear that a Grand Lodge of such limited membership would simply be the laughing-stock of the Masonic world.

The Provincial Grand Master of Scotland, although he fully recognized the desirability of an independent Grand Lodge also declined to move in the matter without the consent of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and accordingly transmitted to his Grand Lodge a copy of the resolutions. If any reply to his communication was received there is no record of it. Vancouver Lodge, however, seems to have gone ahead with the scheme, and evidently submitted it to a number of Canadian and American Grand Lodges with the view of ascertaining the kind of reception the new Grand Lodge might expect. Apparently

the result was encouraging, for at a meeting held on the 18th of January, 1871, it was announced that all the Grand Lodges communicated with had signified their sympathy with and approval of the project. Thereupon a committee was appointed to arrange for the meeting of a convention of the Masters, Wardens and Past Masters of the different Lodges in the colony.

The committee accordingly issued a call for a convention to be held in the city of Victoria on the 18th of March, 1871. Again Victoria Lodge was the only English Lodge which favoured the movement, and upon receipt of the communication from Vancouver Lodge forwarded it to the District Grand Master with a request that the Lodge be allowed to attend the meeting. The District Grand Master submitted the correspondence to the District Board of General Purposes which, after due consideration, decided that the time was not opportune for the formation of an independent Grand Lodge although such a step might be advisable in the future, and acting on this advice the District Grand Master refused to allow his Lodges to send delegates to the convention.

Notwithstanding the aloofness of the English Brethren, the representatives of the Scotch Lodges held the convention on March 18th, 1871, according to schedule, and decided to form a Grand Lodge for the colony. There is no record of the meeting, and it is not known who were present except W. Brothers [Simeon Duck](#) and G. C. Keays and Brothers H. F. Heisterman and George Grant. R. W. Brother I. W. Powell, who, however, was absent from the colony, was elected Grand Master and Brother H. F. Heisterman, Grand Secretary, and an invitation was sent to and accepted by M. W. Brother the Hon. Ellwood Evans, Past Grand Master of Washington, to attend and install the officers of the new Grand Lodge. An invitation to be present was also sent to R. W. Brother Burnaby, upon receipt of which he instructed the District Grand Secretary to attend the meeting and protest against its proceeding in the matter.

This he did, and the protest was effectual, for the representatives of Caledonia Lodge returned home with the information that the formation of a Grand Lodge had been indefinitely postponed.

Some time during the summer R. W. Brother Powell returned from England and found the Brethren in a state of dissension and discord.

Feelings ran high, and the two sections of the Craft were hardly on speaking terms. He and R. W. Brother Burnaby held several consultations on the subject, and after agreeing between themselves that the formation of an independent Grand Lodge was desirable, decided to submit the question to a vote of all the members of their respective Jurisdictions. It was stipulated and understood by the Brethren that in the event of the Craft voting in favour of an independent Grand Lodge, either Brother Powell or Brother Burnaby would be the first Grand Master, and whichever was *not* elected Grand Master would be made Past Grand Master.

A circular was accordingly issued by the Provincial and District Grand Masters to their respective Lodges instructing the Brethren to vote on the question of forming an independent Grand Lodge. The result of the vote was one hundred and ninety-four in favour of and twenty-eight against the proposition. The result of the vote being so overwhelmingly in favour of [forming a Grand Lodge](#) another convention was called and was held in Victoria on the 21st of October, 1871, there being present the representatives of

all the Lodges in the Province with the exception of Union Lodge, which declined to join. Brother [James A. Grahame](#), of Quadra Lodge was appointed chairman of the meeting, and Brother H. F. Heisterman, of the same Lodge, Secretary.

A resolution declaring it expedient to form a Grand Lodge in and for the Province of British Columbia was carried unanimously and amidst great applause, and immediately afterwards another declaring the Grand Lodge of British Columbia to be formed was also carried unanimously.

R. W. Brother Powell was elected Grand Master, and in consideration of their valuable services R. W. Brother Burnaby was made an honorary Past Grand Master, and W. Brother James A. Grahame an honorary Past Deputy Grand Master of the new Grand Lodge. After some formal business was transacted the meeting adjourned, and was called together again on the 26th of December, 1871, when the officers-elect were installed by M. W. Brother Burnaby. Nanaimo Lodge and Caledonia Lodge displayed some reluctance to accept Warrants from the new Grand Lodge, fearing that they would be called on to change their rituals (and in the case of Caledonia Lodge, their clothing.) However, a letter from the Grand Master was read in Nanaimo Lodge, and one from the Grand Secretary in Caledonia Lodge, stating that all the Lodges could practice their own rituals so long as they desired, which seemed to dispel the fears of the Brethren, and the new Warrants were accepted.

The first special or emergent meeting of Grand Lodge was held in the city of New Westminster on the 30th of July, 1872, the occasion being the laying of the corner stone of the Mortuary Chapel of the Masonic Cemetery at Sapperton. Besides the Grand Lodge officers there were present about sixty of the Brethren, and the stone was laid in due and ancient form by the Grand Master, M. W. Brother I. W. Powell.

Unfortunately, although the corner stone was so well and truly laid thirty-seven years ago, the Mortuary Chapel has not made any further progress.

A peculiar circumstance in connection with this function was the presence of an [Oddfellows'](#) Lodge, as such. In the "Order of Procession" the formation is

Two Tylers.

Band.

The Noble Grand, Officers and members of the Oddfellows'
Lodge No. 3, New Westminster, and visiting Brethren.

While the Grand Master, in his Address, said "In thanking the many for their attendance to-day, let me particularize our hearty appreciation of the presence of a sister organization—the Odd Fellows. Their mission is also one of benevolence and charity; and their association and co-operation to-day is most gratifying evidence to their cordial sympathy with the objects of our present assemblage." At the time of the above-mentioned meeting Union Lodge was still on the English registry. It shortly afterwards joined the new Grand Lodge, for at the annual communication held on December 7th, 1872, the Grand Master expressed his gratification that unification of the Craft had been accomplished by Union Lodge transferring its allegiance. The fraternal feeling displayed by the new Grand Lodge in laying the corner stone for Union Lodge—and probably the persuasive eloquence of Brothers Powell and Burnaby—no doubt hastened the action of Union Lodge in the matter, for M. W. Brother Powell stated in his Address that it was only a few days after the

emergent meeting that a request for admission to the fold was received from the Lodge, The few months' delay however, lost Union Lodge its place on the roll, and instead of being No. 2, it had to be content with No. 9.

At this communication the Grand Master reported also that all the Grand Lodges of the Dominion and all those of the United States, with the exception of Indiana, had "extended a hearty recognition and warm welcome" to the new Grand Lodge. Indiana had not refused to recognize them, but was waiting to see what action would be taken by the British Grand Lodges.

At this Communication, too, provision was made for the institution of a Charity Fund, and the matter was referred to the Board of General Purposes that rules governing the fund might be drawn up.

At the Annual Communication in 1873 the Board submitted these rules, which provided for the establishment of two Funds—a Benevolent Fund and a Widows' and Orphans' Fund. These were to be inaugurated by a contribution from each Lodge of two dollars for every member on its roll and the same for every Brother raised or affiliated. The support of the Funds was provided for by levying an assessment of three dollars per annum on every member. Of the money so collected, three-fourths were to be devoted to the Fund of Benevolence and one-fourth to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund.

In this year 1873 — on the 5th of November, the two Lodges in Nanaimo, Nanaimo No. 3 and Caledonia No. 6, agreed to amalgamate, and their request to be allowed to do so was granted by Grand Lodge on the 8th of December, 1873, and at the same time the name of the Lodge was changed to Ashlar, the number of Nanaimo Lodge being retained.

Some objection having been made to the date of meeting of Grand Lodge, no Annual Communication was held in 1874, but an emergent Communication was held at Nanaimo on the 21st of October of that year to lay the corner stone of the new Masonic Hall at that place.

Although this is called a special Communication of Grand Lodge, it does not appear that Grand Lodge was opened at all. The Grand Master opened Ashlar Lodge and laid the corner stone, after which he surrendered the gavel to the Worshipful Master of Ashlar Lodge, who conferred the first degree on a candidate. When this had been done the Lodge was called to refreshment to partake of the inevitable banquet, after which labour was resumed and the Lodge drank the healths of the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Grand Master, and of anyone else whose name happened to occur to them. At this meeting, whether one of Grand Lodge or Ashlar Lodge, the announcement was made that the Grand Lodge of England had extended recognition to the new Grand Lodge.

Affairs Masonic proceeded uneventfully until the meeting of Grand Lodge in February, 1878, the Craft holding its own, but no material advance being made. At this Communication it was announced that the four Lodges in Victoria had amalgamated into two—Victoria and British Columbia Lodges uniting to form Victoria-Columbia, No. 1, and Vancouver and Quadra Lodges joining to make Vancouver and Quadra. Lodge No. 2.

Various Grand Masters during these years had urged the erection of a Masonic building in Victoria, but although the project, inevitably received the approval of the different committees to which It was referred, no active move appears to have been made

in the matter until 1877 when a Building Association was formed with a capital of ten thousand dollars, and in July of that year two lots were purchased on the corner of [Douglas and Fisguard](#) [*sic*] streets, the price being one thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars. The property was deeded to the Grand Master in trust and subsequently conveyed to the Craft by a trust deed. A contract was let for the building at eight thousand, five hundred and twenty-eight dollars, and it was expected that the building would be finished and ready for dedication on June 24th, 1878. Matters did not advance so rapidly as was expected, however, and it was not until April 22nd 1878 that the corner stone of the new building was laid, the dedication not taking place until the 28th of October in the same year.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the cost considerably exceeded the contract price.

In 1879 another change in the time of meeting of Grand Lodge was made, the date being altered from February to June.

Although application had been made to the Grand Lodge of Scotland for recognition immediately upon the formation of Grand Lodge, that Grand Lodge for some reason, but in a manner quite consistent with its constant practice, paid no attention to the communication and in the Addresses of different Grand Masters we find reference to this apparent lack of courtesy. However, in 1880 [M. W. Brother Harrison](#) informed Grand Lodge that the Grand Lodge of Scotland had at last recognized the Grand Lodge of British Columbia—nine years after the request had been made. Even then it was a conditional recognition. Scotland claiming the right

1st. To protect the interest of any of its Lodges which might exist in the Province, and

2nd. To protect the rights of any Lodges which might subsequently be formed in the Province under its authority.

To the first claim, as M. W. Brother Harrison pointed out, there could be no exception, as no Scotch Lodges remained, but to the second he entered a strong protest in which he was strongly supported by the committee on his Address. The Grand Lodge, too, adopted a resolution denying the right of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, or of any other Grand Lodge, to Warrant Lodges in the Province. It is satisfactory to note that the Grand Lodge of Scotland has made no attempt to invade the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia.

In spite of the expectations of rapid progress which obtained when the Grand Lodge was organized, no attempt was made for some ten years to institute a new Lodge in the Jurisdiction. In 1881 the Board of General Purposes reported that the preliminary steps had been taken to organize a new Lodge at Yale, which was then a flourishing town.

The Board stated that the requirements of the Constitution had been complied with and recommended that a Warrant be issued. Fifteen Brethren joined in the petition for a new Lodge, a dispensation for which was issued on the 22nd of June, 1881, under the name of [Cascade Lodge No. 10](#). On the 5th of July, 1881, "a more extended dispensation" was issued, and on the 29th of October, 1881, by order of the Grand Master, a Warrant was

given it, the officers named in the Warrant being Brothers Alex. Lindsay, Worshipful Master, [Isaac Oppenheimer](#), Senior Warden, and Benjamin Douglas, Junior Warden.

Its existence was of short duration, a fire at Yale and the changes incident to railway construction having made it expedient to return the Warrant to Grand Lodge inside of a year. The Board of General Purposes in 1882 in reporting the fact stated that in view of the circumstances under which the Warrant had been surrendered, it had been agreed to issue a new Warrant free of charge to a sufficient number of the original petitioners at any time during the ensuing twelve months, should it be thought advisable. Unfortunately the happy hour never came, and the first-born of the Grand Lodge died in infancy.

The membership in the Jurisdiction, too, remained practically stationary for a number of years. At the time of its organization in 1871 the Grand Lodge had under its jurisdiction two hundred and ninety-three members, and it was not until 1886 that the Grand Master was able to report any substantial gain. In that year the returns showed three hundred and thirty-three members on the roll, and the Grand Secretary reported the formation of a new Lodge—this time at Kamloops, under the name of [Kamloops Lodge](#) and the number of the defunct Lodge at Yale—No. 10.

In 1886 the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed through to the coast, bringing with it a large number of eastern Masons and opening the way for many others to come and settle in the Province.

From this time the history of Grand Lodge is one of uninterrupted progress. New Lodges were added year by year, and the Craft has steadily grown until at the date of the last Lodge returns (December 31st, 1908) there were forty-seven Warranted Lodges and eight under dispensation, with a total membership of four thousand, one hundred and fifty-eight.

Here, Brethren, I conclude this brief and necessarily imperfect sketch. I am aware that many interesting details have been omitted, and I have not attempted to deal with the history of each Lodge in detail except so far as it relates to matters connected with the formation of Grand Lodge. From a small and insignificant beginning, which really seemed to justify the fear of the Grand Secretary of England that the new Grand Lodge would be the laughing-stock of the Masonic world, we have grown to these magnificent proportions. How proud, then, we should be of those pioneers of Freemasonry who with faith in the future of the Province assumed the risk of failure and bore the burden and heat of the day in establishing and carrying through to success the Grand Lodge of British Columbia. Let us hope—and there is every reason to expect—that those at the head of our affairs will in the future, as in the past, be actuated by the same true Masonic spirit and guided by the same high Masonic motives.

“May Brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us.”

Proceedings of the M.W. Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia, Fortieth Annual Communication held in Victoria, B.C.. 1911 : The Colonist Presses, 1911. Appendix ii, pp. xv.