



27th November 2009

Grand Secretaries Office
Freemasons Hall
17 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2

FAO R W Bro.Lyons,

Dear Barry,

Re: Conflict of interest.

Further to my letter of 20th November 2009 and the reviewing of other documents, they have added upon concerns of complicity with a conflict of interest on Bro Matthews's membership on the sub-committee panel. It was previously stated and noted, by Grand Lodge letter that no conflict existed. Although the current panel advised that they cannot sequester any documents even to enable my proper defence, I give you detail where information can be located in Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim files.

Bro Matthews represents the charities within the Province of Down. In 2007 the Belfast Masonic Charity and Widows fund undertook the organising of a Masonic Fun Day during which a sum in excess of £7,000 was raised and a positive image of Freemasonry portrayed. The event received favourable press coverage for the Order in general. Despite formal requests to Antrim and Down Provinces to participate and to promote the event, both declined. As a member of the organising committee, we collectively could not fathom the reasoning for the Provinces to shun the event, until recent disclosures.

Within Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim documents it is recorded that the Provincial Grand Master stated his concern regarding the provinces lack of authority over charities, in particular naming the Belfast Funds and in order to obtain control of them that Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim laws should be changed. The Provincial Grand Master felt this was even more so when **he** was in dispute with masons who were active in charities but not directly accountable to **him**. The Masonic laws clearly give power for the province to the Board of General Purposes and Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim and not a Masonic mogul. To act in this manner unilaterally, is clearly subversion of the laws we agreed to follow. One of these brethren with whom he had dispute, is a trustee of a charity targeted in these remarks by the Provincial Grand Master. The Provincial Grand Master advises his cabinet **that they, the Cabinet are not squeaky clean.** During cabinet meetings in 2007 discussions took place wherein they colluded

with Down Province to obstruct the event whilst also raising debate at Grand Lodge forums for changes to occur. It is accepted that the Assistant Grand Master Bro Johnston as representing the Benevolent Institutions, Bro Matthews of Co Down and Bro Millen of Antrim amongst many others, including a Grand Masters Council, debated these issues. With the tone and sentiments of language expressed in documents, one could say some sought to overthrow the charities in question. The outworking and conclusion to these deliberations were delivered earlier this year when Bro Johnston advised, for reasons of subvention alone, that the Belfast funds would receive no further money. Therefore, despite the nine year precedent of transferring funds, no further cash was available. It is noteworthy that whilst a charity active solely within Down and Antrim is starved of cash, a report produced at the hands of Bro Millen and Matthews recommends major change, the same report the particular Belfast charities never were officially given nor notified of, the discovery of said report was made by complete accident. The existence of the substantial sum in excess of £1M stg accrued in VJ number 2 account in Northern Ireland was never declared to masons in an open transparent manner.

The records indicate that during the debate where the Provincial Grand Master discussed how to obtain control over the charities it records **Bro J O Dunlop conspiring with fellow cabinet members to contrive reasons to block the Fun Day by seeking to introduce six items for action attempting to block the organising committee. An example given is the PSNI vetting of anyone involved with children during the fun day, thereby assisting the Provincial Grand Master in his quest.** These intentions with a clear path shown in the documents to act vengefully by cabinet officers are a disgrace to the Order. More especially when this was a charitable event with extensive support for the event by brethren of Antrim and Down and more particularly the brethren of the Six Mile Valley Charity District, all of whom contributed their time, wisdom and expertise selflessly. The cabinet of Co. Down are also implicated by taking the advice offered from Antrim in that they should avoid supporting the event, this they did with one senior officer therein confirming same to an event member. The obvious overall intention was to make the event a failure embarrassing the charity and masons involved, no doubt to the glee of those in cabinet.

The brethren they had complaint about were later, upon proper investigation by Grand Lodge mediators, cleared of all matters and apologies given to them in Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim, this was despite the Provincial Grand Masters admission of his and his officers guilt in official documents which was never disclosed or admitted to the mediators, one would assume this also were true of the Grand Lodge complaints panel formed and chaired by Bro Johnston to investigate the problems. When one discovers recorded in documents that the panel chairman was conspiring with the Provincial Grand Master during the hearings offering advice to him on how they perceived he would regain the upper hand, after promising the opposing side that no discussions would take place either inside or outside the Board of General Purposes at Grand Lodge with the Antrim cabinet, one would have good cause to disbelieve them today.

It is my clear perception, given the events of earlier this year, the kangaroo court to name but one, the cabinet, still bent on vengeance and vendetta continue to see their path through to the demise of the Belfast Masonic Widows Fund with further charges now laid upon two of the self same masons and one brother prosecuted because he has been associated with them, each of these masons uphold our Masonic principles and seek the truth told. As displayed to the provinces Board on the 12th May, these brethren have nothing to hide and all to tell, the problem for the leadership is, the message they tell condemns many of them.

Bro Matthews and Bro Johnston are two of four panel members of the Grand Lodge sub-committee during hearings on 7th and 14th November 2009 and I had cautioned Grand Lodge of their potential bias. You replied stating that neither had a case to answer on this point, but this is now a proven error. My point to the committee as I stated during my hearing, when only one part of the picture is seen, or a story only partially told, then an erroneous decision will be made. This is an injustice against the whole Masonic Order by a few Senior Officers. My father, also under charges is a trustee of Belfast funds and therefore Bro Matthews and Bro Johnston's actions in producing reports and / or discussing my father being one of the brethren Bro JS Dunlop's cabinet accused in 2007, they are unsuitable panel members.

To fulfil fairness and equality, Bro Matthews and Bro Johnston should not be hearing the charges of Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim officers and particularly that of the Provincial Grand Master designate. To announce a promotion and proceed with an installation of any brother while a summons of charges is upon them especially with Grand Lodge itself finding that they had a case to answer, is not a prudent act to protect the Order. Senior Officers must be heard by a different panel exempt from all possible bias and free from previous prejudice now exposed. It is also irregular for any committee to only hear two sets of charges against the senior officers when many others have existed for months and await satisfaction but are not included within this particular round of complaints. Is Grand Lodge, in the weeks to come, actually going to host a hearing on a serving Provincial Grand Master upon charges which were laid many months before he was invested, one charge of which is undeniable, his full and absolute participation in the procedurally defective meeting of the 18th March 2009? The Provincial Grand Master designate is guilty of that charge for his accuser has at least 140 witnesses. Absolutely unbelievable!

Other documents reveal a **threat**, discussed at cabinet level against trustee's of Arthur Square Masonic Hall in May 2007. As such the cabinet contemplated the withholding of Grand Lodge grant aid to the trustee's. This had arisen during my time as Superintendent of Works because the cabinet were placing Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim in contravention of current VAT regulations in sending improper invoices. To have sought payment upon flawed invoices would have broken the law. The trustees did not pay until their Hall secretary, who is a chartered accountant was satisfied on matters. They had with assistance from myself, tried to get the Officers to see this resolved over many months without success. For the cabinet to have contemplated not to forward Grand Lodge fabric fund monies when it was themselves at fault beggar's belief. To contemplate impeding

the success of the largest Masonic project in Northern Ireland for many a year, is equally incredulous. Eventually the cabinet corrected their errors and concurred with the trustees initial comments. Once a proper invoice was raised it was paid by return in expedient manner which the trustees originally wanted to do. This was another example of an unmasonic act by Senior Officers, which like many others is never to be revealed, but Senior Officers continue to shoot the messengers and they hope the messages die.

I believe it is appalling that we proceed to install a new Provincial Grand Master and probably the same Senior Officers of 2007-2009 given what information and injustice's they have wrought on our Province as contained in these documents and shown in my letter of February 09 to our Grand Master. Yet Grand Lodge continue to shield them by holding what one can see in evidential form, is just another stage managed hearing having bias members with obvious intent shown in documentation, now implicating other panel members who may have been duped by their fellows and superiors into participating.

This letter, adding to the letter of last week should enable you, to assess the direction of poor governance of the Order in general, with the only conclusion that masons have been misled. The irregular charges, the motive in having them laid, the manner they arrive to Grand Lodge, the irregular prohibition of masons for telling the truth, the unbalanced approach to others who host kangaroo courts in the name of Freemasonry, all raise serious and grave concern upon a flawed process of natural justice and breaches of contract.

It is noted that during the hearing dated 14th November 2009, the contents of my letter to the Grand Master of February 2009 were not disputed, the only complaint arising from this letter made by the panel was that I had written to the Grand Master and not the Deputy, and even though this was not with what I had been charged, it seemed Bro Matthews took especial exception to my error, this was despite my efforts, testified to by the Grand Secretary, seeking the his advice in how best to deliver it to the Grand Master. The content therefore having now been reviewed by the Grand Lodge cabinet, the hearing panel and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim cabinet, it being undisputed by them, I feel justified in reserving the right to publish my letter and supporting documents now available on all these subject matters to any other forum where I deem it necessary to afford protection to myself or others or to assist upon enquiries underway. The Retention team, still a valid committee under the Board of General purposes, can continue its mandate to report factual evidence it has gained. On this subject I draw your attention to the document of mid May 2008, only days before a vote to sell the property had been sanctioned, wherein Bro Frazer again misleads his audience by announcing the recent valuation of the Mural has been set at £1,000,000.00 yet he always states to the Board of General Purposes and Lodges its value as published in the frequently asked question places it at £40,000-£50,000, one could hardly deny the two figures quoted by him are similar!

Conclusion

What is very clear to me having experienced at official Masonic forums and read in documents is that the Masonic order in Ireland is not unlike the religious orders over past decades. The Ryan report, concluding this year and the Yvonne Murphy report published yesterday draw many parallels in that the men in positions of power feel justified in the actions they take and consider themselves above our laws. Just like the religious orders, senior men tolerate injustices turning a blind eye condoning it. The two religious reports, for those people involved they experience their year of awakening and the hand of justice falls upon them, for our Order that day has not arrived, in the mean time professional misconduct rules the day at the expense of Masons everywhere. To quote a passage of Masonic text many of us may be familiar with *“wine is wicked, the king is wicked, women are wicked, all the children of men are wicked, and such are all their wicked works: and there is no truth in them; in their unrighteousness also they shall perish. As for truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for ever more”*

To the branches above Craft or organisations which have been damaged by the Cabinets conduct

I again state that I am willing to meet with a committee to permit a review of documentation to allow them to further your own deliberations on these matters, without a perception of bias or disinformation by Grand Lodge these same branches may recall that earlier this year they had been misled by Grand Lodge seeking an edict of prohibition extended beyond the Craft.

Yours fraternally,

W. Bro. Brian S Hood PGLA SOW & SW St Paul's 160

cc.

The Trustee's Freemasons' Hall Arthur Square / Fernhill Catering
Mr N Campbell President of the Belfast Funds and “fun day” committee member
Great Priory
Supreme Grand Chapter
Grand Council of Knight Masonry
Solicitor