

ITEM 9 | PUTTING THE QUESTION AND ANNOUNCING THE VOTE¹

When the debate appears to have closed, the chair asks again, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one rises he proceeds to put the question -- that is, to take the vote on the question, first calling for the affirmative and then for the negative vote. In putting the question the chair should make perfectly clear what the question is that the assembly is to decide. If the question is on the adoption of a resolution, unless it has been read very recently, it should be read again, the question being put in a way similar to this: "The question is on the adoption of the resolution [which the chair reads]; those in favor of the resolution say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted;" or, "The noes have it, and the resolution is lost." Or, thus: "The question is on agreeing to the following resolution," which the chair reads, and then he continues, "As many as are in favor of agreeing to the resolution say aye;" after the ayes have responded he continues, "As many as are opposed say no. The ayes have it," etc. Or, "It is moved and seconded that an invitation be extended to Mr. Jones to address our club at its next meeting. Those in favor of the motion will rise; be seated; those opposed will rise. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted [or carried]." Or, if the vote is by "show of hands," the question is put and the vote announced in a form similar to this; "It has been moved and seconded to lay the resolution on the table. Those in favor of the motion will raise the right hand; those opposed will signify [or manifest] it in the same way [or manner]. The affirmative has it [or, The motion is adopted, or carried] and the resolution is laid on the table." The vote should always be announced, as it is a necessary part of putting the question. The assembly is assumed not to know the result of the vote until announced by the chair, and the vote does not go into effect until announced. As soon as the result of the vote is announced the chair should state the next business in order, as in the following example of putting the question on an amendment: "The question is on amending the resolution by inserting the word 'oak' before the word 'desk.' Those in favor of the amendment say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it and the amendment is adopted. The question is now [or recurs] on the resolution as amended, which is as follows: [read the resolution as amended]. Are you ready for the question?" The chair should never neglect to state what is the business next in order after every vote is announced, nor to state the exact question before the assembly whenever a motion is made. Much confusion is avoided thereby. The vote should always be taken



first by the voice (viva voce) or by show of hands (the latter method being often used in small assemblies), except in the case of motions requiring a two-thirds vote, when a rising vote should be taken at first. When a division is demanded a rising vote is taken. For further information on voting see 46. Under each motion is given the form of putting the question whenever the form is peculiar.

Footnotes

¹ H. R. Rule 1, §5, is as follows:

"5, He shall rise to put a question, but may state it sitting; and shall put questions in this form, to wit: 'As many as are in favor (as the question may be), say Aye;' and after the affirmative voice is expressed, 'As many as are opposed, say No;' if he doubts, or a division is called for, the House shall divide; those in the affirmative of the question shall first rise from their seats, and then those in the negative; if he still doubts, or a count is required by at least one-fifth of a quorum, he shall name one from each side of the question to tell the members in the affirmative and negative; which being reported, he shall rise and state the decision."

