

ITEM 31 | POSTPONE DEFINITELY, OR TO A CERTAIN TIME¹

The time to which a question is postponed must fall within the session or the next session,² and, if it is desired to postpone it to a different time, which must not be beyond the next regular session, it is necessary first to fix the time for an adjourned meeting, and then the question may be postponed to that meeting. Some societies have frequent meetings for literary or other purposes at which business may be transacted, while they hold every month or quarter a meeting especially for business. In such societies these rules apply particularly to the regular business meetings, to which questions may be postponed from the previous regular business meeting or from any of the intervening meetings. Neither the motion to postpone definitely nor an amendment to it, is in order when it has the effect of an indefinite postponement; that is, to defeat the measure, as, for instance, to postpone until tomorrow a motion to accept an invitation to a banquet tonight. If the motion to postpone indefinitely is in order at the time, the chair may treat it as such at his discretion, but it cannot be recognized as a motion to postpone definitely. It is not in order to postpone a class of business, as reports of committees; as each report is announced or called for, it may be postponed, or the rules may be suspended by a two-thirds vote and the desired question be taken up. A matter that is required by the by-laws to be attended to at a specified time or meeting as the election of officers cannot, in advance, be postponed to another time or meeting, but when that specified time or meeting arrives the assembly may postpone it to an adjourned meeting. This is sometimes advisable as in case of an annual meeting for the election of officers occurring on a very stormy night so that a bare quorum is present. After an order of the day or a question of privilege is before the assembly for action, its further consideration may be postponed, or any other subsidiary motion may be applied to it. When a question has been postponed to a certain time, it becomes an order of the day for that time and cannot be taken up before that time except by a reconsideration, or by suspending the rules for that purpose, which requires a two-thirds vote. [See Orders of the Day, 20, for the treatment of questions that have been postponed definitely.]

The Form of this motion depends upon the object sought.

- (1) If the object is simply to postpone the question to the next meeting, when it will have precedence of new business, the form of the motion is "to postpone the question [or, that

the question be postponed] to the next meeting." It then becomes a general order for that meeting.

(2) If the object is to specify an hour when the question will be taken up as soon as the question then pending, if there is any, is disposed of, the form is similar to this: "I move that the question be postponed to 3 P.M."

(3) If it is desired to postpone the question until after a certain event, when it shall immediately come up, the form is, "To postpone the question until after the address on Economics."

(4) If the object is to insure its not being crowded out by other matters there should be added to the motion to postpone as given in the first two cases above, the words, "and be made a special order." Or the motion may be made thus: "I move that the question be postponed and made a special order for the next meeting [or, for 3 P.M. tomorrow]." The motion in this form requires a two-thirds vote, as it suspends the rules that may interfere with its consideration at the time specified as explained under Orders of the Day [20].

(5) If it is desired to postpone a question to an adjourned meeting and devote the entire time, if necessary, to its consideration, as in case of revising by-laws, after providing for the adjourned meeting the motion should be made in this form: "I move that the question be postponed and made the special order for next Tuesday evening." Or, a question may be postponed and made the special order for the next regular meeting.

The Effect of postponing a question is to make it an order of the day for the time to which it was postponed, and if it is not then disposed of, it becomes unfinished business. Postponing a question to a certain hour does not make it a special order unless so specified in the motion. The motion to postpone definitely may be amended by a majority vote so as to make the amended motion one to make the question a special order. If this is done the amended motion will require a two-thirds vote. [Orders of the Day, 20, should be read in connection with this section.]

Footnotes

¹ In Congress the form of this motion is to postpone to a day certain, unless it is proposed to make the question a special order for a certain hour, when the hour is specified.



² In Congress a motion cannot be postponed to the next session, but it is customary in ordinary societies.

