

ITEM 54 | ADOPTION OR ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

When the report of a committee has been received, that is, has been presented to the assembly and either read or handed to the chair or the secretary, the next business in order is the disposal of the report, the proper disposition depending upon its nature.

(1) If the report contains only a statement of fact or opinion for the information of the assembly, the reporting member makes no motion for its disposal, as there is no necessity for action on the report. But if any action is taken, the proper motion, which should be made by some one else, is to "accept the report," which has the effect of endorsing the statement and making the assembly assume responsibility for it.

If it is a financial report, as in case of a board of trustees or a treasurer, it should be referred to an auditing committee, as the vote to accept the report does not endorse the accuracy of the figures, for the assembly can only be sure of that by having the report audited. Whenever such a financial report is made, the chair, without any motion, should say it is referred to the auditing committee or auditors, if there are any. If there are none, then the proper motion is to refer it to an auditing committee to be appointed by the chair. When the auditing committee reports, this report should be accepted, or adopted, which carries with it the endorsement of the financial report.

(2) If the report contains recommendations not in the form of motions, they should all be placed at the end of the report, even if they have been given separately before, and the proper motion is to adopt the recommendations.

(3) If the report concludes with a resolution or a series of resolutions, the proper course is for the reporting member to move that the resolution or resolutions be adopted or agreed to. This method should be adopted whenever practicable.

(4) If a committee reports back a resolution which was referred to it, the motion to postpone indefinitely, if it was pending, is ignored; if an amendment was pending it should be reported on. The form of the question to be stated by the chair depends upon the recommendation of the committee as follows:



(a) If the committee recommends its adoption, or makes no recommendation (where it can come to no agreement), the question should be stated on the amendment if there was one pending, and then on the resolution. These motions were pending when the question was referred to the committee, and therefore should not be made again.

(b) If the recommendation is that the resolution be not adopted, the question on the resolution, when it is put, should be stated thus:

"The question is on the adoption of the resolution, the recommendation of the committee to the contrary notwithstanding."

A similar course is pursued if the committee recommends that an amendment be not adopted.

(c) If the committee recommends that the resolution be postponed indefinitely, or postponed to a certain time, the question should be on the postponement, and, if that is lost, then on the resolution.

(d) If the committee reports back a resolution or paper with amendments, the reporting member reads only the amendments with sufficient of the context to make them understood and then moves their adoption. The chairman, after stating the question on the adoption of the amendments, called for the reading of the first amendment, after which it is open for debate and amendment. A vote is then taken on adopting this amendment, and the next is read, and so on till the amendments are adopted or rejected, admitting amendments to the committee's amendments, but no others. When through with the committee's amendments, the chairman pauses for any other amendments to be proposed by the assembly; and when these are voted on he puts the question on agreeing to, or adopting, the paper as amended, unless, in a case like revising the by-laws, they have been already adopted. By suspending the rules [22], or by general consent, a report can be at once adopted without following any of the above routine.

If the amendments do not call for debate or amendment, as when reported from the committee of the whole, where they have been already discussed, the chair puts a single question on all the committee's amendments except those for which a member asks a separate vote, thus "As many as are in favor of



adopting the amendments recommended by the committee, except those for which a separate vote has been asked, say aye; those opposed say no." He then takes up the remaining amendments separately in their order.

(e) If the committee reports back a resolution with a substitute which it recommends for adoption, the chair states the question on the substitute, if there were no amendments pending when the resolution was committed. If, however, amendments were pending when the resolution was committed, the chair first states the questions on those pending amendments, and when they are disposed of he states the question on the substitute. In either case the substitute is treated like any other substitute motion, the resolution being first perfected by amendments and then the substitute resolution. After both have been thus perfected the question is put on the substitution, and finally on the resolution. If the substitute is lost the resolution is open to amendments proposed by members.

(f) If the report is of a nomination committee no vote should be taken, any more than if a member had made the nominations.

(g) If the report is from the membership committee, the chair at once states the question on the reception as members of the candidates recommended by the committee.

A partial report of a committee is treated the same as the final report. If it reports progress only, without recommendations or conclusions, it is treated as any other report for information, and no action need be taken. But, if the partial report recommends action, then the question is to be put on adopting the report, or its recommendations, or the resolutions, the same as if it were the final report.

While it is customary in ordinary societies to make and second a motion to accept or adopt a committee's report, yet if the motion is not made and the chair deems it best to have a vote taken on the question, he may state the appropriate question without waiting for a motion, accepting the submission of the report by a committee as equivalent to moving the adoption of the appropriate motion for disposing of it, just as is the case when one offers a resolution. To wait to see if two members are in favor of a proposition which at least two have signed, or authorized the chairman, or reporting member, to sign, would appear useless. In ordinary societies the

chairman of the assembly usually knows better than the reporting member how the business should be managed, especially if a resolution is reported with many amendments. However, unless the assembly is accustomed to having its chairman put the proper questions on the report without any formal motion, it is better for the reporting member to move the "adoption" of the resolutions or recommendations, as that is generally understood.

When the chair has stated the question on the adoption of the recommendations or resolutions, or of the report, the matter under consideration is open to debate and amendment, and may have applied to it any of the subsidiary motions, like other main questions. Its consideration cannot be objected to if the matter was referred to the committee. While the report of the committee or its resolutions may be amended by the assembly, these amendments only affect that which the assembly adopts, as the assembly cannot in any way change the committee's report.

For example:

A committee expresses the opinion that Mr. A has no right to commit a certain act, and the assembly strikes out this statement from the report before adopting it. This does not alter the report, but, when the assembly adopts the report, this statement is not adopted. So with a recommendation or a resolution: the assembly may strike out or add one or more recommendations or resolutions before adopting, but that does not alter the committee's report. If the proceedings are published, the committee's report should be printed exactly as it was submitted with the amendments printed below; or, still better, all words struck out should be enclosed in brackets and all words inserted should be printed in italics. and a note to that effect inserted at the beginning.

While the motions to adopt, to accept, etc, are often used indiscriminately, and the adoption of any one of them has the effect of endorsing or adopting the opinions, actions, recommendations, or resolutions submitted by the committee, as the case may be, yet it is better to use them as heretofore stated. If only one term is used, the word "adopt" is preferable, as it is least liable to be misunderstood.