

ITEM 63 | SESSION

A Session of an assembly is a meeting which, though it may last for days, is virtually one meeting, as a session of a convention; or even months, as a session of Congress; it terminates by an "adjournment sine die (without day)." The intermediate adjournments from day to day, or the recesses taken during the day, do not destroy the continuity of the meetings, which in reality constitute one session. Any meeting which is not an adjournment of another meeting commences a new session. In the case of a permanent society, whose by-laws provide for regular meetings every week, month, or year, for example, each meeting constitutes a separate session of the society, which session, however, can be prolonged by adjourning to another day.

In this Manual the term Meeting is used to denote an assembling of the members of a deliberative assembly for any length of time, during which there is no separation of the members except for a recess of a few minutes, as the morning meetings, the afternoon meetings, and the evening meetings, of a convention whose session lasts for days. A "meeting" of an assembly is terminated by a temporary adjournment or a recess for a meal, etc.; a "session" of an assembly ends with an adjournment without day, and may consist of many meetings. So an adjournment to meet again at some other time, even the same day, unless it was for only a few minutes, terminates the meeting, but not the session, which latter includes all the adjourned meetings. The next meeting, in this case, would be an "adjourned meeting" of the same session.

In ordinary practice a meeting is closed by moving simply "to adjourn;" the society meets again at the time provided either by the rules or by a resolution of the society. If it does not meet till the time for the next regular meeting as provided in the by-laws, then the adjournment closes the session, and was in effect an adjournment without day. If, however, it had previously fixed the time for the next meeting, either by a direct vote or by adopting a program of exercise covering several meetings, or even days, in either case the adjournment is in effect to a certain time, and while closing the meeting does not close the session.

In such common expressions as quarterly meeting and annual meeting the word meeting is used in the sense of the parliamentary session, and covers all the adjourned meetings. Thus, business that legally must be done at the annual meeting may be done at any time during the session beginning at the time specified for the annual meeting, though the session, by repeated adjournments, may last for days.



The business may be postponed to the next regular meeting, if desired.

Under Renewal of Motions [38] is explained what motions can be repeated during the same session, and also the circumstances under which certain motions cannot be renewed until after the close of the next succeeding session.

A rule or resolution of a permanent nature may be adopted by a majority vote at any session of a society, and it will continue in force until it is rescinded. But such a standing rule does not materially interfere with the rights of a future session, as by a majority vote it may be suspended so far as it affects that session; and, it may be rescinded by a majority vote, if notice of the proposed action was given at a previous meeting, or in the notice of the meeting; or, without any notice, it may be rescinded by a majority of the entire membership, or by a two-thirds vote. If it is desired to give greater stability to a rule it is necessary to place it in the constitution by-laws, or rules of order, all of which are so guarded by requiring notice of amendments, and at least a two-thirds vote for their adoption, that they are not subject to sudden changes, and may be considered as expressing the deliberate views of the whole society, rather than the opinions or wishes of any particular meeting.

In case of the illness of the presiding officer the assembly cannot elect a chairman pro tem. to hold office beyond the session, unless notice of the election was given at the previous meeting or in the call for this meeting. So it is improper for an assembly to postpone anything to a day beyond the next succeeding session, and thus attempt to prevent the next session from considering the question. On the other hand, it is not permitted to move the reconsideration of a vote taken at a previous session, though the motion to reconsider can be called up, provided it was made during the previous session in a society having meetings as often as quarterly. Committees can be appointed to report at a future session.

NOTE ON SESSION.

In Congress, and in fact all legislative bodies, the limits of the sessions are clearly defined; but in ordinary societies having a permanent existence, with regular meetings more or less frequent, there appears to be some confusion upon the subject. Any society is competent to decide what shall constitute one of its sessions, but, where there is no rule



on the subject, the common parliamentary law would make each of its regular or special meetings a separate session, as they are regarded in this Manual.

The disadvantages of a rule making a session include all the meetings of an ordinary society, held during a long time, as one year, are very great. If an objection to the consideration of a question as been sustained, or if a question has been adopted, or rejected, or postponed indefinitely, the question cannot again be brought before the assembly for its consideration during the same session. If a session lasted for a long period, a temporary majority could forestall the permanent majority, and introduce and act on a number of questions favored by the majority, and thus prevent the society from dealing with those subjects for the long period of the session. If members of any society take advantage of the freedom allowed by considering each regular meeting a separate session, and repeatedly renew obnoxious or unprofitable motions, the society can adopt a rule prohibiting the second introduction of any main question within, say, three months after its rejection, or indefinite postponement, or after the society has refused to consider it. But generally it is better to suppress the motion by refusing to consider it [23].

