

ITEM 69 | AN OCCASIONAL OR MASS MEETING**(a) Organization.**

Before calling a meeting that is not one of an organized society, the following Preliminary Steps should be taken: Those who are responsible for the call should consult together and agree upon the place and time of the meeting, how the notice shall be given, who shall call the meeting to order and nominate the chairman, who shall be nominated for chairman, and who shall explain the object of the meeting. It is also good policy sometimes to have a set of resolutions drafted in advance to submit to the meeting.

It is not customary to call mass meetings to order promptly at the appointed time, but to wait ten or fifteen minutes, when the one chosen for the purpose steps to the front and says: "The meeting will please come to order; I move that Mr. A act as [or I nominate Mr. A for] chairman of this meeting." Some, one else says, "I second the motion [or nomination]." The first member then puts the question to vote, by saying, "It has been moved and seconded that Mr. A act as [or Mr. A has been nominated for] chairman of this meeting; those in favor of the motion [or nomination] say aye;" and then the affirmative vote is taken, he says, "Those opposed say no." If the majority vote is in the affirmative, he says, "The ayes have it, and Mr. A is elected chairman. He will please take the chair." If the motion is lost he announces that fact, and calls for the nomination of some one else for chairman, and proceeds with the new nomination as in the first case.

The member who calls the meeting to order, instead of making the motion himself, may act as temporary chairman, and say, "The meeting will please come to order; will some one nominate a chairman?" He puts the question to vote on the nomination as described above, or as below, in case of the secretary. This is dangerous, however, in large meetings, where an incompetent person may be nominated and elected chairman. In large assemblies, the member who nominates, with one other member, frequently conducts the presiding officer to the chair, and the chairman makes a short speech, thanking the assembly for the honor conferred on him.

When the chairman takes the chair he says, "The first business in order is the election of a secretary." Some one then makes a motion as just described, or he says, "I nominate Mr. B,"



when the chairman puts the question as below. Sometimes several names are called out, and the chairman, as he hears them, says, "Mr. B is nominated; Mr. C is nominated," etc.; he then takes the vote on the first one he heard, putting the question in a form similar to this: "As many as are in favor of Mr. B for secretary say aye; those opposed say no. The chair is in doubt: those in favor of Mr. B for secretary will rise; those opposed will rise. The negative has it and the motion is lost. As many as are in favor of Mr. C for secretary say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it, and Mr. C is elected secretary. He will please take his place at the desk." If Mr. C fails of election the vote is taken on the next nominee, and so on until one is elected. The secretary should take his seat near the chairman, and keep a record of the proceedings, as described in 59. The chairman should always stand in putting the question to vote, and in large assemblies it is better for him to stand while stating the question. During debate he should be seated, and pay attention to the discussion. When nominations are made it is optional whether they are seconded or not. They are usually not debated, though sometimes the one making the nomination and the one seconding it say a few words at the time in favor of their nominee. A nomination cannot be amended. If additional officers are desired, they may be elected in the same manner as the secretary.

(b) Adoption of Resolutions.

These two officers are all that are usually necessary, so as soon as the secretary is elected, the chairman directs the secretary to read the call for the meeting and then calls on the person most familiar with the question to explain the object of the meeting more fully, or he may do this himself. This explanation should be immediately followed by some one's offering a series of resolutions previously prepared, or by his moving the appointment of a committee to prepare resolutions upon the subject. In the first case he rises and says, "Mr. Chairman;" the chairman responds, "Mr. C." Mr. C, having thus obtained the floor, says, "I move the adoption of the following resolutions," which he reads and hands to the chairman. Some one else says, "I second the motion." The chairman then says, "It has been moved and seconded to adopt the following resolutions," which he reads, or directs the secretary to read, and then says, "The question is on the adoption of the resolutions." If no one rises at once, he



asks, "Are you ready for the question?" The resolutions are now open to debate and amendment. They may be referred to a committee, or may have any other subsidiary motion applied to them. When the debate appears to be finished, the chair again asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one then rises, he says, "As many as are in favor of the adoption of the resolutions say aye;" after the ayes have voted, he says, "As many as are of a contrary opinion [or are opposed] say no;" he then announces the result of the vote as follows: "The ayes have it [or the motion is carried] and the resolutions are adopted." If the debate has lasted any length of time, he should, before taking the vote, have the resolutions again read.

It is the practice, in legislative bodies, to send to the clerk's desk all resolutions, bills, etc., the title of the bill and the name of the member introducing it being indorsed on each. In such bodies, however, there are several clerks and only one chairman. In most assemblies there is but one clerk or secretary, and as he has to keep the minutes, there is no reason for his being constantly interrupted to read every resolution offered. In such assemblies, unless there is a rule or established custom to the contrary, it is usually much better to hand all resolutions, reports, etc., directly to the chairman. If they were read by the member introducing them, and no one calls for another reading, the chairman may omit reading them when he thinks they are fully understood. [For the manner of reading and stating the question when the resolution contains several paragraphs, see 24.]

Dividing Resolutions. If the committee reports several independent resolutions relating to different subjects, the chair must state the question separately on the resolution, or resolutions, relating to each subject, on the request of a single member. If the resolutions relate to a single subject and yet each one is capable of standing alone if all the rest are rejected, they may be divided by a majority vote on a motion to divide the question, as explained in 24, If the resolutions are so connected that they cannot stand alone, then the proper way to secure a separate vote on any objectionable resolution is to move to strike it out. When the chair states the question on striking it out, the resolution is open to amendments of the second degree, so as to perfect it, before the vote is taken on striking it out. [See 33:6.]



Amending a Resolution. If it is desired to amend a pending resolution, that is, a resolution that the chair has stated as before the assembly for action, a member rises and obtains the floor as already described, and offers, or moves, his amendment, thus: "I move to insert the words 'with asphalt' after the word 'paved.'" If the motion is not at once seconded, the chair asks if the motion is seconded. In a large assembly he should repeat the motion before making this inquiry, as members who would be willing to second the motion may not have heard it. In fact, the chair must usually assume that some members do not hear what is said from the floor, and therefore that he must always repeat motions and the result of votes. The motion being seconded, the chair states the question thus: "It is moved and seconded to amend the resolution by inserting the words 'with asphalt' after the word 'paved.' Are you ready for the question?" The question is now open to debate and amendment, which must be confined, however, to the amendment, as it has superseded the resolution and has become what is termed the immediately pending question. If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair puts the question thus: "As many as are in favor of the amendment [or motion] say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it, and the amendment is adopted. The question is now on the resolution as amended, which is as follows [repeat the amended resolution]. Are you ready for the question?" The resolution is again open to debate and amendment, as it has again become the immediately pending question. When the chair thinks the debate ended, he asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one rises to claim the floor, he puts the question on the resolution, thus: "The question is on adopting the following resolution: "Resolved, That Those in favor of the motion [or, of adopting the resolution] say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted."

(c) Committee to Draft Resolutions.

If it is preferred to appoint a committee to draft resolutions, a member, after he has addressed the chair and has been recognized, says: "I move that a committee of five be appointed by the chair to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of this meeting on," etc., adding the subject for which the meeting was called. The motion being seconded, the chairman states the question thus: "It has been moved and seconded that a committee of five be appointed by the chair



to draft resolutions, etc. [repeat the motion]. Are you ready for the question?" If no one rises he may put the question thus: "As many as are in favor of the motion say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it and the motion is adopted." Or, it may be put thus: "The question is, 'Shall a committee of five be appointed by the chair to draft resolutions, etc. [repeating the motion]?' As many as are of the affirmative will raise their right hands. As many as are of the negative will signify it in the same way. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted. The chair will appoint Messrs. A, B, C, D, and E as the committee on resolutions. The committee will withdraw and prepare the resolutions as quickly as possible. What is the further pleasure of the meeting?"

In a mass meeting, or in any very large assembly, it is safer to have all committees appointed by the chair. If the assembly, however, prefers a different method, the procedure is as described in 32; or the following method may be adopted: A member moves, "That a committee be appointed to draft resolutions," etc. This motion being adopted, the chair asks: "Of how many shall the committee consist?" If only one number is suggested, he announces that the committee will consist of that number; if several numbers are suggested, he states the different ones, and then takes a vote on each, beginning with the largest, until one number is selected. He then inquires: "How shall the committee be appointed?" This is usually decided without the formality of a vote. The committee may be "appointed" by the chair, in which case the chairman names the committee, and no vote is taken; or the committee may be "nominated" by the chair, or by members of the assembly (no member naming more than one, except by unanimous consent), and then the assembly votes on their appointment. When the chairman nominates, after stating the names, he puts one question on the entire committee, thus: "As many as are in favor of these gentlemen constituting the committee say aye," etc. If nominations are made by I members of the assembly, and more names are mentioned than the number of the committee, a separate vote must be taken on each name, in the order of nomination, until the committee is filled.

When the committee is appointed, it should at once retire and agree upon a report, which should be written out as described in 52. During its absence other business may be attended to, or the time may be occupied with hearing addresses. If the chairman sees the committee return to the room, he should



announce, as soon as the pending business is disposed of, or the member speaking closes, that the assembly will now hear the report of the committee on resolutions: or, before this announcement he may ask if the committee is prepared to report. If the chairman does not notice the return of the committee, its chairman avails himself of the first opportunity to obtain the floor, when he says: "The committee appointed to draft resolutions is prepared to report." The chairman tells him that the assembly will now hear the report, which is then read by the chairman of the committee, who immediately moves its adoption, and then hands it to the presiding officer, upon which the committee is dissolved without any action of the assembly. The chairman then proceeds as stated above when the resolutions were offered by a member. If it is not desired immediately to adopt the resolutions, they may be debated, modified, their consideration postponed, etc., as explained in 10.

When through with the business for which the assembly was convened, or when from any other cause it is desired to close the meeting, some one moves "to adjourn." If no time has been appointed for another meeting, this motion may be amended and debated as any other main motion. If the motion is carried, and no other time for meeting has been appointed, the chairman, in case the ayes and noes are nearly equal, says: "The ayes seem to have it, the ayes have it, the motion is adopted, and we stand adjourned without day (sine die)." If the vote is overwhelmingly in the affirmative, the expression, "The ayes seem to have it," should be omitted. If a time for an adjourned meeting has been appointed, the chair declares the assembly "adjourned to 8 o'clock next Wednesday evening," or whatever is the appointed time. Before declaring the adjournment, or even taking a vote on adjourning, the chair should satisfy himself that all required notices are given.

(d) Semi-Permanent Mass Meetings.

Sometimes it is desirable to continue the mass meetings until a certain object is accomplished, and in such case the assembly may prefer to make a temporary organization at first, and then make their semi-permanent organization with more deliberation. If so, the assembly would be organized as just described, only adding "pro tem." to the title of the officers, thus, "chairman pro tem." The "pro tem." is never

used in addressing the officers. As soon as the secretary pro tem, . is elected, a committee is usually appointed to nominate the semi-permanent officers, as in the case of a convention. A committee on rules should also be appointed, which should recommend a few rules providing for the time and place for holding the meetings, for some authority on parliamentary law, and for the number and length of speeches allowed, if two speeches not to exceed ten minutes each is not; satisfactory.

Frequently the presiding officer is called the President, and sometimes there is a large number of Vice Presidents appointed for merely complimentary purposes. The Vice Presidents in large formal meetings sit on the platform beside the President, and in his absence, or when he vacates the chair, the first on the list that is present should take the chair.

