

ITEM 70 | A PERMANENT SOCIETY**(a) First Meeting.**

When it is desired to form a permanent society, those interested in it should consult together and carefully lay their plans before calling a meeting to organize the society. They should also be careful in calling the meeting to see to it that there is a majority in sympathy with their plans. By neglect of this, and giving a newspaper invitation to all interested in the object to attend the meeting, those who originated the work have found themselves in the minority and not in sympathy with the constitution which was adopted, so that they did not care to join the society after it was organized. Having taken all the preliminary steps, then, as described in case of a mass meeting [69], they invite those who they have reason to think are in sympathy with their general plans to meet at a certain time and place to consider the question of organizing a society for a certain purpose. As one of their preliminary steps they should procure copies of the constitutions and by-laws of several similar societies for the use of the committee in drafting their own.

It is not usual in meetings called to organize a society, or in mass meetings, to commence until ten or fifteen minutes after the appointed time, when the person previously selected for the purpose steps forward and says: "The meeting will please come to order; I move that Mr. A act as chairman of this meeting." Some one "seconds the motion," when the one who made the motion puts it to vote (or, as it is called, "puts the question"), as already described under a "mass meeting" [69]; and, as in that case, when the chairman is elected he takes the chair and announces, as the first business in order, the election of a secretary.

After the secretary is elected, the chairman calls on the member who is most interested in forming the society to state the object of the meeting. When this member rises he says, "Mr. Chairman." The chairman then announces his name, when the member proceeds to state the object of the meeting. Having finished his remarks, the chairman may call on other members to give their opinions on the subject, and sometimes a particular speaker is called out by members who wish to hear him. The chairman should observe the wishes of the assembly, and, while being careful not to be too strict, he must not permit any one to occupy too much time and weary the assembly.



When a sufficient time has been spent in this informal way, some one should offer a resolution, so that definite action can be taken. Those interested in arranging for the meeting, if it is to be a large one, should have previously agreed upon what is to be done, and be prepared, at the proper time, to offer a suitable resolution, which may be in form similar to this: "Resolved, That it is the sense of this meeting that a society for (state the object of the society) should now be formed in this city." This resolution, when seconded and stated by the chair, is open to debate and amendment, and is treated as already described [69]. This preliminary motion could have been offered at the commencement of the meeting, and if the meeting is a very large one this is generally better than to have the informal discussion.

After this preliminary motion has been voted on, or even without waiting for such a motion to be made, one like this may be offered: "I move that a committee of five be appointed by the chair to draft a constitution and by-laws for a society for (here state the object), and that it report at an adjourned meeting of this assembly." This motion can be amended by striking out and adding words, etc., and it is debatable.

When this committee is appointed, the chairman may inquire; "Is there any other business to be attended to?" or, "What is the further pleasure of the assembly [or club, or convention, etc.]?" When all business is finished, a motion may be made to adjourn to meet at a certain place and time, which, when seconded and stated by the chair, is open to debate and amendment. It is usually better to fix the time of the next meeting at an earlier stage of the meeting; and then, when it is desired to close the meeting, move simply "to adjourn," which cannot be amended or debated. When this motion is carried, the chairman says, "This meeting stands adjourned to meet at," etc., specifying the time and place of the next meeting.

(b) Second Meeting.

At the next meeting the officers of the previous meeting, if present, serve until the permanent officers are elected. When the hour arrives for the meeting, the chairman, standing, says, "The meeting will please come to order;" as soon as the assembly is seated, he says. "The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting," and then takes his seat. If any



one notices an error in the minutes, he should state the fact as soon as the secretary finishes reading them; if there is no objection, without waiting for a motion, the chairman directs the secretary to make the correction. The chairman then says, "There being no [further] corrections, the minutes stand approved as read [or as corrected]."

The chair then announces, as the next business in order, the hearing of the report of the committee on the constitution and by-laws. The chairman of the committee, after addressing "Mr. Chairman" and being recognized, says something like this: "The committee appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws has agreed upon the following, and has directed me to report the same and move their adoption." He then reads them, moves their adoption, and hands them to the chair. The motion being seconded, the chair says: "It has been moved and seconded to adopt the constitution and by-laws reported by the committee. The question is on the adoption of the constitution, which will now be read." The constitution is then read from the platform by the secretary, or by the chairman of the committee, as the chair directs. This reading may be dispensed with by general consent, as it has already been read. He then reads, or has read, the first paragraph, and asks if there are any amendments proposed to this paragraph. When through with amending it he says, "There being no [further] amendments to this paragraph, the next will be read." No vote should be taken on adopting the separate paragraphs. He thus proceeds through the entire constitution, and then says the whole constitution is now open to amendment. This is the time to insert additional paragraphs, or make any amendments to the earlier paragraphs rendered necessary by changes made in the later ones.

When the chairman thinks the constitution has been modified to suit the wishes of the assembly, he inquires: "Are you ready for the question?" If no one wishes to speak, he puts the question: "As many as are in favor of adopting the constitution as amended say aye;" and then, "As many as are opposed say no." He distinctly announces the result of the vote. This should never be omitted. Only a majority vote is required to adopt a constitution of a new society, or to amend it before it is adopted.

The chairman now states that the constitution having been adopted, it will be necessary for those wishing to become



members to sign it (and pay the initiation fee, if required by the constitution), and, if the assembly is a large one, suggests that a recess be taken for the purpose. A motion is then made to take a recess for, say, ten minutes, or until the constitution is signed. The constitution being signed, no one is permitted to vote excepting those who have signed it, and thus have joined the society. While the payment of the initiation fee is strictly a prerequisite to the right to vote, it should be waived at this meeting with those who are unprepared to make the payment.

The recess having expired, the chairman calls the meeting to order, and says, "The secretary will read the roll of members." This is necessary in order that all may know who are entitled to take part in the future proceedings. After the roll has been read, the chair says, "The question before the assembly is on the adoption of the by-laws reported by the committee. The secretary will please read them." He then proceeds exactly as in the case of the constitution. The motion to adopt the constitution and by-laws reported by the committee having been made when the committee made its report, no further motion is necessary.

When the by-laws are adopted, the chair says, "The next business in order is the election of the permanent officers of the society." The by-laws should prescribe the method of nomination and election of the officers. and they should be strictly complied with. If the by-laws do not prescribe the method of nomination, the chair asks, "How shall the officers be nominated?" Some one may at once move that a committee be appointed by the chair to nominate the permanent officers of the society. This motion being adopted, the chair appoints the committee, which retires and agrees upon a ticket. During the absence of the committee the assembly may transact any business it pleases, or it may take a recess. When the committee returns to the hall, as soon as pending business is disposed of, the chair calls on the chairman of the committee for the report. The chairman of the committee reads the list of nominations, and hands it to the chair. The chair reads the list, and then asks, "Are there any further nominations?" Any member may now rise and, after addressing the chair, nominate any one else for any office, or he may nominate one person for each office, thus proposing a new ticket. The chair announces the nominations as made, and when he thinks that no more names will be proposed, he asks, "Are there any more

nominations?" If there is no response, and if the by-laws prescribe that the election shall be by ballot, as they usually should, he appoints tellers and directs them to distribute blank ballots, upon which each member writes the name of each office and the person for whom he votes to fill that office. When the ballots are filled out, the chair directs the tellers to collect the ballots, which they do, in any convenient receptacle. The chair then inquires if all have voted who wish to, so as to be sure that the tellers have not missed any members. When all have voted that wish, he announces that "the polls are closed," and the tellers count the ballots, and the first one appointed reports the vote, as described on page 196, under Voting by Ballot. The chair then announces as elected all the candidates who received a majority vote, and the temporary officers are immediately replaced by the permanent ones elected. If the president is elected on this first ballot he immediately takes the chair. In case any of the offices remain unfilled, the chair immediately orders the tellers to distribute blank ballots, and directs the assembly to prepare ballots for these offices. Balloting is continued until all the offices are filled. The voting is not limited to the nominees, as every member is at liberty to vote for any member who is not declared ineligible by the by-laws.

After the offices are filled, if there is business that the chair knows requires immediate attention, he should mention it. Committees should probably be appointed for various purposes, as described in the by-laws, and the place of meeting should be determined. It is possible that an adjourned meeting may be necessary in order to complete the organization before beginning the regular work of the society. When the work is completed, or when an adjourned meeting has been provided for, and the lateness of the hour requires an adjournment, some one should move to adjourn. If the motion is carried, the chair announces the vote and declares the assembly adjourned. If there can be any question as to where and when the next meeting is to be held, he should mention the place and time, though this is not necessary afterwards when the place and time are regularly established and known.

If the society is one that expects to own real estate, it should be incorporated according to the laws of the state in which it is situated, and for this purpose some member of the committee on the constitution should consult a lawyer before

this second meeting, so that the constitution may conform to the laws of the state. In this case the trustees, or managers, or directors, are usually instructed to take the proper measures to have the society incorporated.

(c) Regular Meetings of a Society.

After a society is properly organized, its regular business meetings are conducted as follows: When the hour fixed for the meeting to begin arrives, the presiding officer takes the chair and calls the meeting to order and directs the secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting. When they are read, he asks, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" If none are suggested, he adds, "There being none, the minutes stand approved as read." If any corrections are suggested, the secretary makes them, unless there is opposition. If there is difference of opinion, some one moves to amend the minutes, or the chair, without waiting for a motion, may put the question on the amendment that has been suggested. When this has been settled, the chair asks, "Are there any further corrections (or amendments) to the minutes?" If there is no response, he adds, "There being none, the minutes stand approved as corrected." He then announces the next business in order, following the order of business prescribed by the rules of the society.

If the order of business is the same as given in 65, as soon as the minutes are read and approved, the chair says, "The next business in order is hearing the reports of the standing committees." He may then call upon each committee in its order for a report, thus: "Has the committee on applications for membership any report to make?" In this case the committee may report as shown above, or some member of it reply that it has no report to make. Or, when the chairman knows that there are but few, if any, reports to be made, it is better, after making the announcement of the business, for him to ask, "Have these committees any reports to make?" After a short pause, if no one rises to report, he states, "There being no reports from the standing committees, the next business in order is hearing the reports of special committees," when he will act the same as in the case of the standing committees. The chairman should always have a list of the committees, to enable him to call upon them, as well as to guide him in the appointment of new committees.



Having attended to the reports of committees, the chair announces the next business in order, and so on until the business of the meeting has been disposed of, when some one moves to adjourn. If this motion is carried, the chair announces the vote and declares the assembly adjourned.

The meetings of different societies vary greatly, and they should be managed differently in order to obtain the best results. Some societies require a strict enforcement of parliamentary rules, while with others the best results will be obtained by being informal. It is important that the presiding officer have tact and common sense, especially with a very intelligent assembly.

