



ROBERT RULES OF ORDER
ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES AND BOARDS
(ALL-IN-ONE)

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ARTICLE IX
COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

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ROBERT RULES OF ORDER

PART: I

ARTICLE: IX

TITLE: Committees and Boards

ITEMS: 49 through 57



ITEM 49 | COMMITTEES CLASSIFIED

A Committee is a body of one or more persons appointed or elected by an assembly or society to consider, or investigate, or take action in regard to, certain matters or subjects, or to do all of these things. Committees may be divided into two distinct classes:

(1) Boards of Managers or Directors, Boards of Trustees, Executive Committees, etc.

(2) Ordinary Committees, Special or Standing, and Committee of the Whole and its substitutes.

These different kinds of committees are considered separately in the following five sections.



ITEM 50 | BOARDS OF MANAGERS, ETC., AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Committees of this class are essentially small deliberative assemblies, subordinate to the body that appoints them, with their duties and authority, and the number of their regular meetings and their quorums, defined by the parent body, or by its authority. Boards or Committees of this class are usually appointed by organizations that meet only annually or quarterly. With such an organization it is customary and necessary to delegate to a committee, usually known as the Board of Managers or Directors, all its authority, with slight limitations, to be exercised between its meetings. The by-laws of the Board are adopted by the parent body, or the Board may be authorized to adopt its own by-laws. It is usual to authorize the Board to appoint from its membership an Executive Committee of a specified number who shall have all the power of the Board between the meetings of the Board, just as the Board has all the power of the Society between the meetings of the Society, except that the subordinate body cannot modify any action taken by its superior. The Executive Committee should be small and the members should live near enough each other to be able to have frequent regular meetings, besides special meetings in emergencies. Where the organization is local, such as a society for sustaining an orphan asylum, the Board of Managers usually divides itself into committees having charge of different branches of the work during the intervals between the monthly or quarterly meetings of the Board, when these committees report on the work done. It is seldom that resolutions or other matters are referred to boards or committees of this class for them to report back to the society with recommendations. If papers are referred to them it is usually for their information and action. They are organized as any other deliberative assembly with a chairman and a secretary, whom they elect if they are not appointed by the society. Frequently the by-laws of the society make its president and its corresponding, or executive secretary, ex-officio, [51] president and secretary of the Board of Managers.

In large boards business is transacted the same as in the society meetings; but in small boards the same formality is not necessary or usual, the informality observed by committees being generally allowed. In a board meeting where there are not more than about a dozen present, for instance, it is not necessary to rise in order to make a motion, nor to wait for recognition by the chair before speaking or making a motion, nor for a motion to have a second; nor is there any limit to the number of speeches, nor does the chairman leave the chair when making a motion or discussing a



question. The formalities necessary in order to transact business in a large assembly would hinder business in so small a body.

Boards are often constituted so that the term of office of, say, one-third of its members expires each year. After each annual meeting in such case, the board elects new officers and committees, the same as if the entire board had been re-elected. All unfinished business falls to the ground when the new board is elected.

It is customary for the by-laws to require an annual report from the Board of Managers, which usually gives a brief account of its doings for the year with recommendations for the future. After discussion, and amendment if necessary, the report is usually adopted by the society and published in its annual proceedings as the report of the board. In such a case, care should be taken in publishing it to inclose in brackets all that has been struck out, and to put in italics whatever has been inserted, and to insert a note to that effect at the beginning of the report, so that exactly what the board recommended can readily be seen. The minutes should read thus: "The Board of Managers submitted its report which after discussion and amendment was adopted as follows, the words in brackets having been struck out and those underscored (in italics) having been inserted before the report was adopted." The society cannot alter the report of the board. It may decline to indorse it, or even to allow it to be printed, but it cannot make it appear that the board stated anything different from what it has reported. By the above plan is shown exactly what the board reported and what the society adopted, or endorsed.

ITEM 51 | EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Frequently boards and committees contain some members who are members by virtue of their office, and, therefore, are termed ex-officio members. When such a member ceases to hold the office his membership of the board terminates automatically. If the ex-officio member is under the control of the society, there is no distinction between him and the other members except where the president is ex-officio member of all committees, in which case it is evidently the intention to permit, not to require, him to act as a member of the various committees, and therefore in counting a quorum he should not be counted as a member. The president is not a member of any committee except by virtue of a special rule, unless he is so appointed by the assembly. If the ex-officio member is not under the authority of the society, he has all the privileges, including the right to vote, but none of the obligations of membership; as when the governor of a state is, ex-officio, a manager or a trustee of a private academy.



ITEM 52 | COMMITTEES, SPECIAL AND STANDING

It is usual in deliberative assemblies, to have all preliminary work in the preparation of matter for their action done by means of committees. The committee may be either a "standing committee," appointed for a definite time, as a session or a year; or a "special [or select] committee," appointed for a special purpose; or a "committee of the whole" consisting of the entire assembly. [For method of appointing committees of the whole, see 55; other committees, see Commit, 32.] Committees of the whole are not used much except in legislative bodies, and when the word committees is used in this Manual, unless specified to the contrary, standing or special committees are meant. Unless the assembly has appointed a chairman, either directly or through its presiding officer, the first named on a committee, and in his absence the next named member, becomes chairman, and so on and should act as such unless the committee by a majority of its number elects a chairman, which it has the right to do if the assembly has not appointed one, and which a standing committee usually does. The clerk should furnish him, or, in his absence, some other member of the committee, with notice of the appointment of the committee, the names of the members, the papers or matter referred to it, and such instructions as the assembly has decided upon. Upon the committee's request, all papers and books necessary for the proper performance of its duties should be turned over to it by the proper officers.

It is the duty of the chairman to call the committee together, but, if he is absent, or neglects or declines to call a meeting of the committee? it is the duty of the committee to meet on the call of any two of its members. In small special committees the chairman usually acts as secretary, but in large ones and in all standing committees, it is customary to elect a secretary, who keeps a brief memorandum of what is done, for the use of the committee. Members of the society have a right to appear at the committee meetings and present their views on the subject before it at such reasonable times as, upon request, the committee may appoint. But during the deliberations of the committee no one has a right to be present, except members of the committee.

The rules of the assembly, as far as possible, apply to the committee, but motions to close or limit debate are not allowed, and there is no limit to the number of times a member may speak, and unless the committee is very large, it is not necessary for any one to rise and address the chair before making a motion or speaking, nor does the chairman rise to put the question, nor does



he leave the chair to speak or make motions, nor are motions seconded. These formalities are unnecessary because the committee is so small, but, unless agreed to by general consent, all questions must be put to vote. Instead of the chairman's abstaining from speaking on questions, he is, usually, the most active participant in the discussions and work of the committee. In order that the assembly may have the benefit of the matured judgment of the committee, a reconsideration of a vote must be allowed regardless of the time and of previous reconsideration, and it may be moved by any one who did not vote with the minority, even if he was absent when the previous vote was taken; but it shall require a two-thirds vote for its adoption unless every member who voted with the majority is either present or received ample notice of the meeting and that the reconsideration was to be moved. This prevents taking advantage of the absence of members to reverse action, and enables members who were absent to bring up the question of reconsideration.

The committee constitute a miniature assembly, being able to act only when a quorum (a majority of the members) is present. If a paper is referred to them, they must not write on it, but should write their amendments on a separate sheet. If the amendments are numerous it is better to write out a substitute and submit it. If a resolution is referred to a committee while a motion to postpone indefinitely is pending, only the resolution is referred to the committee, the motion to postpone indefinitely being ignored. If amendments are pending they go to the committee, who may recommend their adoption or rejection, or make no recommendation in regard to them. If the committee originate the paper, all amendments must be incorporated in it. When they originate it, usually one member has previously prepared a draft, which is read entirely through, and then read by paragraphs, the chairman pausing after each paragraph, and asking: "Are there any amendments proposed to this paragraph?" No vote is taken on the adoption of the separate paragraphs; but, after the whole paper has been read in this way, it is open to amendment generally, by striking out any paragraph, or by substituting or inserting new ones, or by substituting an entirely new paper for it. If there is a preamble it is considered last. When the entire paper has been amended to suit the committee, they should adopt it as their report, and direct the chairman or some other member to report it to the assembly. When committees are appointed to investigate, or to report upon, certain matters, the report should close with, or be accompanied by, formal resolutions covering all recommendations, so that when their



report is made no motion is necessary except to adopt the resolutions.

If the report is written in this form, "Your committee are of the opinion that Mr. A's bill should be paid," there might be some doubt as to the effect of the adoption of the recommendation or the report. The report should close with a recommendation that the following order be adopted: "Ordered, That the treasurer pay Mr. A's bill for \$10.15." If a report recommends that charges be preferred against Mr. B, it should close with recommending the adoption of resolutions, which should be written out, providing for holding an adjourned meeting, and for citing the member to appear at the adjourned meeting for trial on charges that must be specified. These should be prepared by the committee and submitted as a part of their report. The committee should never leave to others the responsibility of preparing resolutions to carry out their recommendations. They should consider this as one of their most important duties.

When the report has been adopted by the committee a clear copy is made, usually commencing in a style similar to this: "The committee to whom was referred (state the matter referred), beg leave to submit the following report ;" or, "Your committee appointed to (specify the object), respectfully report," etc. If the report is of much importance it should be signed by all the members concurring in the report; but when it is of little importance, or merely recommends amendments, etc., it may be signed by the chairman alone, his signature being followed by the word "Chairman." He should not, however, place "Chairman" after his signature except when he signs the report alone and by the authority of the committee. The report must always be in the third person though written and signed by only one. The signature may be preceded by the words, "Respectfully submitted," but it is not necessary. Usually the report is not dated or addressed, and sometimes it consists merely of a resolution, or a set of resolutions. In the latter case the chairman states he is instructed by the committee to submit and to move the adoption of the resolutions. The report of the majority is the report of the committee and should never be referred to as the majority report.

If the minority submit a report, (or more properly, their "views,") it may commence thus: "The undersigned, a minority of the committee appointed, etc., not agreeing with the majority, desire to express their views in the case." After the committee's report has been read and the motion to adopt has been made and the question stated,



it is usual to allow the minority to present their views, but if any one objects to its reception the chair should put the question to vote on its being received. It requires a majority vote to receive it, the question being undebatable. When the minority report is read it is for information, and it cannot be acted upon except by a motion to substitute it for the report of the committee. Whether the views of the minority are read or not, any one can move to substitute the resolutions they recommend for those recommended by the committee. Where the minority cannot agree, each member may submit his views separately. In some cases a member agrees to the report with a single exception, in which case instead of submitting his views separately, after all have signed who agree to the report he may write that he agrees to the report except the part which he specifies, and then sign the statement.

The committee's report¹ can contain only that which has been agreed to by a majority vote at a meeting of which every member has been notified, or at an adjourned meeting thereof (a quorum, a majority of the members, being present), except where it is impracticable to have a meeting of the committee, when it may contain what is agreed to by every member. If a committee is appointed from different sections of the country with the expectation that its work will be done by correspondence, its report can contain only what is agreed to by a majority of the members.

A committee, except a committee of the whole, can appoint a sub-committee which, however, reports to the committee, and never to the assembly. This sub-committee must consist of members of the committee, except in cases where the committee is appointed to take action that requires the assistance of others, as to make arrangements for holding a bazaar. In such a case it is best to appoint the committee with power to appoint such subcommittees as are required; or, as is frequently done, to appoint the committee "with power," which means with power to take all the steps necessary to carry out its instructions. A committee has no power to punish its members for disorderly conduct, its recourse being to report the facts to the assembly. No allusion can be made in the assembly to what has occurred during the deliberations of the committee, unless it is by a report of the committee or by general consent. When a special committee is through with the business assigned it, a motion is made for the committee to "rise" (which is equivalent to the motion to adjourn without day), and that the chairman (or some member who is more familiar with the subject) make its report to the assembly. A special committee ceases to exist as soon as the assembly receives its report. When a committee

adjourns without appointing a time for the next meeting, it is considered as having adjourned at the call of the chair, so that all the meetings of a special committee constitute one session. A meeting of a special committee may be called at any time by the chairman or by any two of its members, every member being notified. When a committee adjourns to meet at another time, it is not necessary (though usually advisable) that absent members should be notified of the adjourned meeting.

A standing committee is either wholly, or partially, elected at each annual meeting in ordinary societies, and immediately thereafter it reorganizes by electing a chairman (unless he has been appointed by the assembly) and a secretary. Therefore, a standing committee must report at the annual meeting, or before, on everything referred to it during the year. The motion to rise is never used in standing committees or boards, nor is it used in other committees except when the committee is ready to report so that it will never meet again. A special committee is appointed for a specific purpose, and until the duty assigned it by the society is accomplished it continues to exist, unless sooner discharged, which requires a two-thirds vote if done without notice being given. The fact that an annual meeting has intervened does not discharge a special committee appointed by a society. But in an elected or appointed body, as a convention, special committees that have not reported cease to exist when the new officers assume their duties at the next annual meeting. When discharged, the chairman of the committee returns to the secretary all documents received from him.

While in small assemblies, especially in those where but little business is done, there is not much need of committees, in large assemblies, or in those doing a great deal of business, committees are of the utmost importance. When a committee is properly selected, in nine cases out of ten its action decides that of the assembly. A committee for action should be small, and consist only of those heartily in favor of the proposed action. If one not in sympathy with it is appointed, he should ask to be excused. A committee for deliberation or investigation, on the contrary, should be large, and represent all parties in the assembly, so that its opinion will carry with it as great weight as possible. The usefulness of the committee will be greatly impaired if any important faction of the assembly is unrepresented on the committee. The appointment of a committee is fully explained in 32.



Footnotes

¹ In Congress nothing can be "the report of the committee but what has been agreed to in committee actually assembled," so that a report signed by a majority of a committee acting separately was ruled out. In some societies, however, it is often impracticable to have regular committee meetings with a majority present.



ITEM 53 | RECEPTION OF REPORTS

When there is a place in the order of business provided for reports of committees, they are not made until they are called for by the chair. Upon the arrival of the time for these reports, the chair calls for the reports of such officers and standing committees as are required to make reports, in the order in which they are arranged in the rules; after which he calls for the reports of the special committees in the order of their appointment. When called upon, the reporting member (who is the chairman of the committee unless another member is appointed to make the report) rises and addresses the chair, and, when recognized, reads the report and hands it to the presiding officer, or the secretary, and, when necessary, moves its adoption or acceptance as explained in the next section. If the committee reports back a paper with amendments, the amendments are read with sufficient of the related parts to make them understood. If it is desired to have a report made earlier than the rules allow, it can be done, by a two-thirds vote, by suspending the rules [22] and receiving the report at once.

If the order of business makes no provision for the report of the committee, the reporting member, when ready to report, obtains the floor when no business is pending, and informs the assembly that the committee to which was referred such a subject or paper has agreed upon a report which he is now prepared to submit. If the chair thinks the assembly wishes to hear the report he directs him to proceed, whereupon he reads the report and hands it to the chairman and makes the proper motion for its disposal. If before it is read any one objects to its reception, or if the chair is in doubt as to whether it should be received now, he puts to the assembly the question, "Shall the report be received now?" It requires a majority vote to receive it, and the question is undebatable. If the vote is in the negative, a time for the reception of the report should be appointed either by a vote or by general consent. Usually no motions are made or votes taken in regard to receiving reports, these matters being all settled informally by general consent.

If the report is a final one, when the assembly has received the report the committee has completed its work, and, without any motion, it is automatically discharged from further consideration of the subject, and, if it is a special committee, it ceases to exist. If the report is only a partial one the committee is not discharged unless the assembly so votes. If the subject is



recommitted the committee is revived (unless the reference is to another committee), and all parts of the report that have not been adopted by the assembly are ignored by the committee as if the report had never been made. If any member or members wish to submit the views of the minority it is customary to receive such a report immediately after receiving the report of the committee. In such case the reporting member should notify the assembly that the views of the minority will be submitted in a separate paper. As soon as the chair has stated the question on the report, he should call for the views of the minority, which are then read for information. They cannot be acted upon unless it is moved to substitute them for the committee's report, or rather to substitute the recommendations of the minority for those of the committee.

A very common error is, after a report has been read, to move that it be received, whereas the fact that it has been read shows that it has been already received by the assembly. Another mistake, less common, but dangerous, is to vote that the report be accepted, which is equivalent to adopting it [see next section], when the intention is only to have the report up for consideration and afterwards to vote on its adoption.



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.



ITEM 55 | COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

When an assembly has to consider a subject which it does not wish to refer to a committee, and yet where the subject matter is not well digested and put into proper form for its definite action, or when, for any other reason, it is desirable for the assembly to consider a subject with all the freedom of an ordinary committee, it is the practice to refer the matter to the "Committee of the Whole." If it is desired to consider the question at once, the motion is made, "That the assembly do now resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to take under consideration," etc., or, "That we go into committee of the whole to consider," etc., specifying the subject. This is really a motion to "commit." [See 32 for its order of precedence, etc.] If adopted, the chairman immediately calls another member to the chair, and takes his place as a member of the committee. The committee is under the rules of the assembly, excepting as stated hereafter in this section.

The only motions in order are to amend and adopt, and that the committee "rise and report," as it cannot adjourn; nor can it order the "yeas and nays." An appeal from the decision of the chair can be made, and it must be voted on directly, as it cannot be laid on the table or postponed, those motions not being allowed in committee of the whole. Each member can speak only once on the appeal. The only way to close or limit debate in committee of the whole is for the assembly, before going into committee of the whole, to vote that the debate in committee shall cease at a certain time, or that after a certain time no debate shall be allowed, excepting on new amendments, and then only one speech in favor of and one against it, of, say, five minutes each; or in some other way to regulate the time for debate.

If no limit is prescribed, any member may speak as often as he can get the floor, and as long each time as is allowed in debate in the assembly, but he cannot speak a second time provided a member wishes the floor who has not spoken on that particular question. Debate having been closed at a particular time by order of the assembly, the committee has not the power, even by unanimous consent, to extend the time. The committee cannot refer the subject to another committee. Like other committees, it cannot alter the text of any resolution referred to it; but if the resolution originated in the committee, then all the amendments are incorporated in it.

When the committee is through with the consideration of the subject referred to it, or if it wishes to adjourn, or to have the assembly

limit debate, a motion is made that "the committee rise and report," etc., specifying the result of its proceedings. The motion to "rise" is equivalent to the motion to adjourn in the assembly, and is always in order (except while voting or when another member has the floor), and is undebatable and cannot be amended. As soon as this motion is adopted the presiding officer takes the chair, and the chairman of the committee, having resumed his place in the assembly, rises, addresses the chair, and says: "The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration (here he describes the resolution or other matter) and has directed me to report the same with (or without, as the case may be) amendments," provided the committee has concluded its business. If the committee has failed to come to a conclusion, strike out of the report all after "and has" and insert "come to no conclusion thereon." If no amendments are reported, the chair at once states the question on the resolution or other matter referred to the committee. If amendments are reported the reporting member reads them, and hands the paper to the chair, who reads, and states and puts the question on the amendments as a whole, unless a member asks for a separate vote on one or more amendments, in which case a single vote is taken on all the other amendments, and then the question is stated separately on each of the amendments for which a separate vote was asked. The amendments may be debated and amended.

The secretary does not record in the minutes the proceedings of the committee, but should keep a memorandum of the proceedings for its use. In large assemblies the secretary vacates his chair, which is occupied by the chairman of the committee, and the assistant secretary acts as secretary of the committee. Should the committee become disorderly, and the chairman be unable to control it, the presiding officer should take the chair and declare the committee dissolved. The quorum of the committee of the whole is the same as that of the assembly [64]. If the committee finds itself without a quorum, it can only rise and report the fact to the assembly, which in such case must adjourn.

In large assemblies, such as the U.S. House of Representatives, where a member can speak to any question only once, the committee of the whole seems almost a necessity, as it allows the freest discussion of a subject, while at any time it can rise and thus bring into force the strict rules of the assembly. In small assemblies it is usually more convenient to substitute for it either the "Quasi (as if in) Committee of the Whole," as used in the U.S. Senate, or "Informal Consideration," as frequently used



in ordinary societies. These are explained in the next two sections.



ITEM 56 | AS IF IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

As if in (or Quasi) Committee of the Whole is used in the U.S. Senate instead of the committee of the whole, and is more convenient in small assemblies. The motion should be made in a form similar to this: "I move that the resolution be considered as if in committee of the whole." This being adopted, the question is open to debate and amendment with all the freedom of the committee of the whole. The presiding officer, however, retains the chair, instead of appointing a chairman as is done when the assembly goes into committee of the whole. If any motion is adopted, except an amendment, it puts an end to the quasi committee of the whole. Thus, the motion to commit is equivalent to the following motions when in committee of the whole:

- (1) That the committee rise;
- (2) that the committee of the whole be discharged from the further consideration of the subject; and
- (3) that it be referred to a committee.

When the assembly has finished amending the proposition under consideration, without further motion the chairman announces that, "The assembly, acting as if in committee of the whole, has had such subject under consideration, and has made certain amendments," which he then reports. The subject comes before the assembly then as if reported by a committee, the chair stating the question on the amendments as described at the close of the previous section under committee of the whole. The secretary should keep a memorandum of the proceedings while acting as if in committee of the whole, but it should not be entered in the minutes, being only for temporary use. The chairman's report to the assembly should be entered in the minutes, as it belongs to the assembly's proceedings.



ITEM 57 | INFORMAL CONSIDERATION

In ordinary societies the meetings of which are not large, instead of going into committee of the whole. or considering questions as if in committee of the whole, it is more usual to consider the question informally. The motion is made thus: "I move that the question be considered informally." The effect of the adoption of this motion is to open the main question and any amendments that may be proposed, to free debate as if in committee of the whole. No member can speak the second time to the same question as long as a member who has not spoken desires the floor. This informal consideration applies only to the main question and its amendments, so that any other motion that is made is under the regular rules of debate. While considering a question informally the assembly by a two-thirds vote may limit the number or length of speeches, or in any other way limit or close the debate. While the consideration of the main question and its amendments is informal, all votes are formal, the informality applying only to the number of speeches allowed in debate. The instant the main question is disposed of temporarily, or permanently, the informal consideration automatically ceases without any motion or vote.

If the question is considered in either the regular committee of the whole or the quasi committee of the whole, it is necessary formally to report the action to the assembly and then take action on the report. Thus, it will be seen that informal consideration is much simpler than either of the methods described in the previous two sections. It can be used to advantage in assemblies that are not very large, instead of the committee of the whole. While this is not a motion to commit, yet it is used for practically the same purpose as the committee of the whole. It ranks just below the motion "to consider as if in committee of the whole," which is just below "to go into committee of the whole."



APPENDIX



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