



ROBERT RULES OF ORDER
ARTICLE 12: ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS
(ALL-IN-ONE)

{LAST UPDATED: 5/1/1915}
4TH Edition

ARTICLE 12
ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS | FL | BROWARD COUNTY | PART 2 | ARTICLE 12

Rule	Caption	Page
69	An Occasional or Mass Meeting	4
70	A Permanent Society	11
71	Meeting of a Convention	18
-	Appendix	23



ROBERT RULES OF ORDER

PART: II

ARTICLE: XII

TITLE: Organization and Meetings

ITEMS: 69 through 71



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.

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.



ITEM 71 | MEETING OF A CONVENTION

(a) An Organized Convention.

If a convention is an organized body (that is, if when convened it has a constitution and by-laws and officers), a committee on credentials, or registration, and one on program, should have been appointed previous to the meeting. These committees may have been appointed at the previous convention, or by the executive board, or by the president, as prescribed by the by-laws. The committee on credentials, or registration, should be on hand somewhat before the time of the meeting, in some cases the day before, so as to be prepared to submit its report immediately after the opening addresses. It should furnish each delegate, when he registers, with a badge or card as evidence of his being a delegate and having the right of admission to the hall. The committee on program should in most cases have the programs printed in advance. In many cases it is better that the constituent bodies be furnished in advance with copies of the program. This should always be done when there is difficulty in getting full delegations to attend. In addition to these two committees there are a number of local committees usually appointed by the local society, as on entertainment, etc. One of the general officers usually performs the duty of a committee on transportation, to obtain reductions in railroad fares, etc.

When the hour appointed for the meeting arrives, the president, as the permanent presiding officer of a convention is usually called, stands at the desk, and, striking it with the gavel to attract attention, says, "The convention will come to order." In large conventions there is usually much confusion and noise at the opening, and it requires self-control, firmness, and tact on the part of the presiding officer to preserve proper order so that all members may hear and be heard. It is a mistake for the chairman to try to stop the noise by pounding with the gavel and talking so loud as to be heard in spite of conversation on the floor. It is better for him to set the example of being quiet, and to stop all business while the noise is such that members cannot hear. Members should be required to be seated and to refrain from talking except when addressing the chair.

When the convention has come to order it is customary to have some opening exercises, the nature of which depends upon the



character of the convention. In the majority of cases the convention is opened with prayer, an address of welcome, and a response. The program, however, is the president's guide as to the order of business, even though it has not yet been adopted by the convention. It should provide for hearing the report of the credential committee as soon as the opening exercises are concluded, so that it may be known who are entitled to vote. This committee's report usually consists merely of a list of the delegates and their alternates, if any, whose credentials have been found correct, and of the ex-officio members of the convention, no one being on the list, however, who has not registered as present. The constitution should always provide that such as are present of the officers of the convention, the members of the Board of Managers, and the chairmen of the committees that are required to report at the convention, shall be ex-officio members of the convention.

When this report of the credential committee is presented it is read either by the chairman of the committee or by the reading secretary, or official reader, if there is one. In all cases, it, and all other reports, should be read from the platform. When the chairman of a committee cannot read so as to be heard, the report should be read by a reading secretary, or official reader, who should be appointed in every large convention, solely for the purpose of reading resolutions, reports, etc. If there is a case of contest between two sets of delegates and there is serious doubt as to which is entitled to recognition, the committee should omit both from the list and report the fact of the contest. If the committee, however, thinks the contest not justified, it should ignore it and enter on the list the names of the legitimate delegates. A motion should be made to accept or adopt the report, which, after it is stated by the chair, is open to debate and amendment. No one can vote whose name is not on the list of delegates reported by the committee. Upon the motion to substitute one delegation for another, neither one can vote. So upon a motion to strike out the names of a delegation whose seats are contested they cannot vote. But upon the main motion to accept the report, all persons whose names are on the list of members as reported by the committee and amended by the convention are entitled to vote, and they alone. When this report has been adopted, the president should immediately call upon the program committee for a report. The



chairman of that committee submits the printed program and moves, or some one else moves, its adoption. This is open to debate and amendment, and when once adopted by a majority vote can not be deviated from except by a two-thirds vote of those voting, or by a majority vote of the enrolled membership.

The membership of the convention and the program having been decided, the convention is ready for its business as laid down in the program. The two committees, though they have made their reports, are continued through the session, as supplementary reports may be required from them. Additional delegates may arrive, and speakers on the program may be sick or unable to be present, or for other reasons a change in the program may be necessary. These two committees should be allowed at any time to make additional reports. The business is conducted as described in the preceding section, but, of course, the program must be followed. Boards and standing committees and the treasurer are always required to submit annual reports, and sometimes reports are required from various other officers. Generally officers and the board of managers, etc., are elected annually; but some constitutions make the term of office two years, and some provide, in addition, that only about half the officers shall be elected at any one annual meeting. In most organizations it is better to have the term of office begin at the close of the convention, so that the same officers will serve throughout the meetings. At the beginning of the first meeting each day the minutes of the preceding day are read and approved. At the close of the convention, if there is not time to read the minutes of the last day, a motion should be adopted authorizing the board, or some committee, to approve the minutes of that day. As the proceedings of a convention are usually published, a publishing committee should be appointed, which should have the power to edit the proceedings. When through with its business the convention adjourns sine die.

(b) A Convention not yet Organized.

Such a convention is similar to a mass meeting, already described in 69, in that when called to order it has no constitution, by-laws, or officers. It has the added difficulty of determining who are entitled to vote. In the mass meeting every one may vote, but in the convention none



but properly appointed delegates may vote, and sometimes this is a very difficult question to determine justly. The convention must have been called by some committee, or body of men, who should have secured the hall and made the preliminary arrangements for the meeting. If the convention is a very large one, so that it is necessary to reserve the main floor of the hall for the delegates, the committee should allow only those to enter who have prima facie evidence of their right to membership, and in contested cases both sides should be admitted. The chairman of the committee should call the convention to order, and either he or some one the committee has selected for the purpose should nominate a temporary chairman and a temporary secretary. Next should come the appointment of a committee on credentials, whose duty it is to examine all credentials and report a list of all the delegates who are entitled to seats in the convention. When alternates have been appointed they should be reported also. While the committee on credentials is out, committees may be appointed on nominations of officers, on rules, and on order of business or program. In a large convention of this kind all committees should be appointed by the chair, and no one whose right to a seat is questioned should be placed on a committee until the convention has acted favorably on his case. Until the committee on credentials has reported, no business can be done except to authorize the chair to appoint the above mentioned committees. While waiting for the committee on credentials to report, the time is usually spent in listening to speeches. When the committee reports, the procedure is the same as just described in an organized convention. When that report has been adopted, the convention proceeds to its permanent organization, acting upon the reports of the other three committees previously appointed, taking them in such order as the convention pleases. When these reports have been acted upon, the convention is organized, with members, officers, rules, and program, and its business is transacted as in other organized deliberative assemblies. If the convention adopts rules only for the session, the committee on rules need recommend only a few rules as to the hours for beginning the meetings, the length of the speeches, etc., and a rule adopting some standard rules of order, where not in conflict with its other rules. If it is not intended to make a permanent organization, the organization just described is all that is necessary.



If the convention is called to make a permanent organization, the committee on nominations is not appointed until after the by-laws are adopted, and the committee on rules should report a constitution and by-laws as in the case of a permanent society [70]. The committee in such case is more usually called the committee on constitution and by-laws. When a convention of this kind is composed of delegates away from their homes it is practically impossible to have them assemble more frequently than once a year, and, therefore, before the convention meets, a constitution and by-laws should be carefully drafted by those interested in calling the convention. Those who drew up the by-laws should be appointed on the committee, in order to avoid delay in reporting them.

After the committee has reported a constitution and by-laws the procedure is the same as already described in the previous section in case of acting on a constitution and by-laws for a permanent society [70(b)]. When the by-laws are adopted, the officers are elected and committees are appointed as prescribed by the by-laws, and the convention is prepared for its work as already described.



APPENDIX



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