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THE Business Side of a Club

PART II

Underlying Rules for Parliamentary Procedure:

*"Justice and courtesy to all,
One thing at a time,
The rule of the majority,
The rights of the minority."*

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The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service
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THE BUSINESS SIDE OF A CLUB

PART II

It has been said that being familiar with parliamentary procedure would do much toward making one respected, useful, and popular in an organization. Then, too, so much more may be accomplished by the club if the officers, and the members as well, are familiar with parliamentary procedure. Clubs which are not familiar with it will find it worth the time to take about fifteen minutes of each meeting for drill. At first, the simplest parliamentary forms can be studied and as these become familiar more difficult points may be added. There can be no end to the fun that may be had in drills of this kind. Then, too, one never knows how soon such training may be invaluable to an individual. Anything we know how to do and do well is much more of a pleasure to us, and this is particularly true when holding offices and conducting meetings.

First Day

Purpose of Parliamentary Law. "Parliamentary procedure gives a group of people a chance to express themselves in an efficient, orderly manner; as in a game, in order to get anywhere there must be set rules for each individual to follow. The reader has surely attended a meeting where everybody talked at once, confusion reigned, and people went home disgusted and discouraged because nothing whatever was accomplished. There is not the slightest reason why such failures should be made again and again. Theodore Roosevelt always said he could excuse a mistake when made for the first time, it was the repetition of blunders for which he had no mercy."

"Parliamentary procedure is as fascinating as a game of checkers when once the neighborhood gets interested in it. Fifteen minutes of every meeting could very well be given to instruction in rules of order, members being told how to put motions, second them, rise to points of order, etc., and in putting these instructions into immediate execution, for that is the efficient way to learn a thing—by doing it."

How to Make Any Meeting Snappy. Mrs. Mignon Quaw Lott says: "Speak so that you may be understood. Pitch your voice for the person farthest from you; place your voice on your lips and teeth; make your lips help formulate the words. Do not mumble. If you are reading, stand where the light is good, hold the book up, try to throw your voice forward." The reading of the minutes might be made most interesting if you read well.

"Speak to the point—speak with a reasonable degree of speed—do not hesitate—do not deliberate—try to time yourself and see how much you can say in a given amount of time. Know exactly what you are going to do if you are the chairman or president. If you fumble about in indecision your assembly will lose confidence in you. Buy a book of parliamentary rules and keep it for convenient reference. If you are a member and ad-

dressing the Chair, speak loud enough so everybody may hear. The very minute a club cannot hear and understand, you have lost them and might as well dismiss the meeting."

Mr. Gregg says: "Parliamentary law may vary in the details of its rules, but underlying it all there are found four invariable foundation principles or corner stones, upon which every portion of the superstructure rests. They are: 1. Justice and courtesy to all; 2. One thing at a time; 3. The rule of the majority; 4. The rights of the minority."

Second Day

How to Obtain the Floor to Speak. Only one person should speak at a time, so the one wishing to talk rises and addresses the Chair by saying, "*Madam President*" or "*Madam Chairman*". The personal name is not used. The person wishing to speak should not proceed until the chairman has recognized her by stating her name, or, if the chairman is not familiar with the name, the person states her own name so the chairman will have it for future use. It may happen that more than one person will rise to speak at the same time, and in that case it is the duty of the Chair to decide who is entitled to speak first.

Motions. There are eight general steps found in making and voting upon a motion. They are:

1. Address president, "*Madam President*"
2. Recognition of member, "*Mrs.*"
3. State motion, "*I move that*"
4. Second, "*I second the motion.*"
5. Remarks, "*The motion as stated is*..... *Are there any remarks?*" When the chairman thinks the discussion is about over, she may say, "*If there are no further remarks the vote will now be taken.*"
6. Vote for motion, "*All those in favor of (state motion) say 'Aye'.*"
7. Vote against motion, "*All those opposed say 'No'.*"
8. Decision. President states whether motion is carried or lost.

Third Day

When making a motion, it is better form to say, "*I move that*" than to say "*I move you*". Only one principal motion can be before the club at a time and before it can be voted upon it must receive a second, after which it is ready for discussion or alteration. The one seconding a motion does not rise or need to be recognized by the Chair unless the business is very important and the secretary needs to record the person's name. The chairman has a right to demand that motions be written, especially those which are long or important, for this will help the chairman and the secretary to have them correct thruout. Everyone present is entitled to understand what is going on and to know clearly what the motions are which have been made so the chairman restates a motion **exactly** as it was made in a distinct voice which can be heard by all.

Anyone desiring the discussion closed may say "*Question*" or the chairman may close the remarks by saying, "*Are you ready for the question?*" The only way to dispose of a motion is by a vote. A majority of those voting is necessary to decide any question, either for adoption or rejection. Any member who does not vote, silently gives her consent to the action of the majority and is not at liberty to question such action afterward.

Discussion or Debate. When a motion is ready for discussion the one who introduced it is usually given the floor first if she wishes to talk about it, for she is supposed to be able to explain it better than others. It is well for the chairman to have those who are in favor of the motion alternate with those who are opposed. A member should not speak more than once if she is keeping others from talking who wish to speak, altho the person who made the motion and who spoke first in regard to it has a right to have the courtesy shown her of being given a chance for the last discussion.

Each one who wishes to speak should address the Chair and be given the floor before talking and should then speak to the point, keep within the time limit, and refrain from personalities. To have the meeting according to parliamentary rules there will need to be formality, which at first seems awkward in communities where all are familiar with each other, for to become proficient in parliamentary rules so the meeting will move along like clock work, it is necessary to have each one do her part toward "playing the game" according to the rules. Sometimes one may wish to ask a question and this can be done while someone else has the floor by addressing the question to the chairman, who obtains the answer. This is not considered as a part of the discussion.

Fourth Day

Courtesies. The presiding officer is expected to stand when stating a question, when calling for a vote, or when speaking to the assembly. As a courtesy to the presiding officer and to the other members, one should not talk unless she has regularly obtained the floor. An especially difficult art for the presiding officer to acquire is that of referring to herself in the third person, for the one presiding does not represent herself but is an impersonal chairman. Instead of saying, "I will appoint Mrs. Noble to serve," it is better to say, "*The Chair will appoint Mrs. Noble.*" If it is difficult to make a decision, the president will say, "*The Chair is unable to decide,*" instead of saying, "I am unable to decide." When members are referring to each other it is well to do it in an impersonal way such as "*The last speaker*", or "*The speaker of the opposition*", or "*The introducer of the motion*", etc.

Ways of Voting. There are different methods employed for voting upon a proposition by which the will of the majority may be expressed, such as:

1. **Ayes and nos;** that is, those in favor say "Aye" and those opposed say "No". This is a quick and satisfactory method.
2. **Voting sign;** that is, by raising the hand or using some other visible sign.

3. **Division;** that is, if the president is in doubt she may call for a division of the house; that is, she will ask those in favor to stand and be counted and then those opposed to stand and be counted.
4. **Yeas and nays;** that is, the members respond to roll call and the vote is recorded.
5. **Ballot;** that is, writing the vote on slips of paper which are collected and counted by tellers. This is especially good when secrecy is desired.

The president is always privileged to vote if the vote is by ballot (5), or by yeas and nays (4), or by any other method if her vote would change the result. On page 68 of Professor Gregg's "Parliamentary Law", he says:

"There are some popular misconceptions as to when the chairman may vote, and the exact language of the rule should therefore be noted. Under the rule the chairman may vote in such cases as the following, in addition to voting by ballot and by yeas and nays: (1) if, for example, the vote is 8 for and 8 against a motion, the Chair may vote in the affirmative only, for by so doing she can change the result, but not by voting in the negative; (2) in case of a vote, say, of 8 to 7, she can now vote, but only in the negative, for she can thereby prevent the vote from carrying; (3) in case of motions requiring a two-thirds vote to carry, that is, at least twice as many for as against, she could vote in the affirmative if there were, say, 15 for and 8 against, or in the negative if there were 16 for and 8 against."

One is not privileged to vote on a question which only affects herself; she may, however, make such a motion to discuss it. A member may vote against a motion she has introduced but is "not privileged to speak against it".

Fifth Day

Amending Motions. Only one main motion can be before the assembly at one time. Such a motion may be amended and an amendment made to the first amendment but that is as far as it can go. After the amendments are disposed of then the original motion or amended motion may be further amended at some other place. The finished motion will be disposed of by a vote. It is generally better to vote down or substitute a motion that is not desirable unless there is only a minor change wanted, then it may be amended.

There are four common ways to amend a motion. They are:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| (a) by elimination | (c) by division |
| (b) by addition | (d) by substitution. |

Suppose the motion "*That our club have an exhibit at the next meeting*" had been made (No. 3 on page 2) and seconded (4), then the president would ask for remarks (5). During this time someone could say, "*I move that we amend the motion by adding (b) the words, 'and invite our friends to attend'.*" This amendment is then seconded (4) and the president calls for remarks (5), after which the amendment is voted upon (6 and 7). The president announces the result (8) of the vote after the vote is taken on the amendment. The main motion is again ready for further discussion and may be amended at another place if desired. When

the discussion (5) is concluded, a vote is taken on the original motion if the amendment was lost, or on the amended motion if the amendment carried. If desired to make the amendment by elimination (a), one would say, "*I move to amend the question by striking out (state exact words).*" Amendments made by substitution (d) may be stated as follows: "*I move to amend by striking out the words (state exact words) and inserting in their place (state exact words).*"

Motion to Adjourn. A motion for adjournment is in order when no other member has the floor. The simple motion "*I move we adjourn*" is not amendable and is not debatable except, if carried, it would dissolve the organization. A qualified form, such as, "*I move we adjourn to meet tomorrow*" is to be treated like any other motion.

Sixth Day

The Precedence Given to Motions. Some motions may be made and have advantage over other motions. That is, when a motion listed below is made it would be in order to make any motion that follows it before voting on the particular motion. But any motion listed above it is out of order until the particular motion is voted on. Motions as found in F. M. Gregg's "Parliamentary Law" have been made into a table which will help one to understand what may be done to motions.

I. Principal Motions

	Vote	Debate	Postpone	Amend	Com.	Table
1. Main motion	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Rescind or repeal	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Expunge	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

II. Subsidiary Motions

1. Postpone indefinitely	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	No	No	No	No
2. Amend	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
3. Refer to committee	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
4. Postpone to definite time ..	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
5. Previous question	$\frac{2}{3}$	No	No	No	No	No
6. Lay on table	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	No	No	No

III. Incidental Motions

1. Suspension of rule	$\frac{2}{3}$	No	No	No	No	No
2. Withdrawal of motion ..	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	No	No	No
3. Reading papers	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	No	No	No
4. Point of order	$\frac{2}{3}$	No	No	No	No	No
5. Appeal	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
6. Reconsider	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

IV. Privileged Motions

1. Call for order of day	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	No	No	No
2. Question of privilege ...	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Take recess	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	Yes	No	No
4. Adjourn (unqualified) ..	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	No	No	No
5. Adjourn (qualified)	$\frac{1}{2}$	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Fix time to re-assemble ..	$\frac{1}{2}$	No	No	Yes	No	No

Seventh Day

Subsidiary Motions. It is often desirable to dispose of a main motion or question in some other way than by directly adopting or rejecting it, or the assembly may wish to modify a motion or stop debate on it. Subsidiary motions are each used for such purposes as described below.

Postpone indefinitely. This is a method of indirectly disposing of a motion during the remainder of the season.

Amend means to add to, strike out, insert or substitute.

Refer or commit. This is referring the question to a committee who will give it careful consideration.

Postpone to a definite time. This motion has the effect of postponing until the time named. When this time arrives a member wishing to bring the question before the assembly will say, "*I call for the order of the day.*"

Previous question. The object of this is to close the debate and bring the question to an immediate vote. The form for the motion is "*I call for the previous question,*" and when seconded, the Chair says, "*The previous question has been called for, shall debate now be suppressed?*" and the vote is taken.

Lay on the table. This means that it is put aside until a more convenient time to discuss it, and it may be taken up again at any time when there is no other business before the assembly. The form of the motion is "*I move to lay the question on the table.*" This is not debatable.

Eighth Day

Point of Order. Point of order is a way of calling attention to a violation of some parliamentary rule. It is executed as follows:

- A. Member, "*Madam President, I rise to a point of order.*"
- B. President, "*Please state your point of order.*"
- C. Member, "*My point of order is that the parliamentary rule (state rule) has been violated.*"
- D. President, "*The Chair decides that the point is (or is not) well taken.*" Whereupon the one who has been violating the rule proceeds to correct it or is permitted to proceed as before.

Appeal from Decision of Chair. When any member is not satisfied with the decision of the Chair, she makes an appeal as follows:

- A. Dissatisfied member, "*Madam President, I appeal from the decision of the Chair.*"
- B. President, "*The decision of the Chair has been appealed from; as many as are in favor of sustaining the decision of the Chair say, 'Aye', those opposed say, 'No'.*"
- C. The motion is (or is not) carried. If the motion is carried and the decision of the Chair is sustained, the business proceeds according to the decision of the Chair. If, however, the motion is lost and the decision of the Chair is not sustained, the business proceeds according to the ruling of the assembly.

A Question of Privilege or Information. The speaker may be interrupted by any member for the purpose of asking a question. This question may be one of personal privilege or may be for the purpose of gaining information about the subject under discussion. In either case the presiding officer may rule for or against the person asking the question, and if there is no objection her rulings stand. The question of privilege is used to secure some "right with respect to safety, comfort, dignity, reputation or freedom from disturbance." The procedure for information would be:

- A. Member taking floor while another member is speaking, "*Madam President, I rise to ask a question of information.*"
- B. Chairman, "*State your question.*"
- C. Member, "*Do I understand the speaker to mean that , etc.?*"
- D. The speaker may give the information desired then.

The procedure for personal privilege would be:

- A. Member, "*I rise to question of privilege.*"
- B. Chairman, "*State your question of privilege.*"
- C. Member, "*As a question of privilege, I move that*"

There are many good parliamentary books. A few of them are:

Gregg, F. M., *Parliamentary Law*, published by Ginn & Co., Chicago. This is the parliamentary manual which has been used by both branches of the Nebraska legislature since 1912.

Robert, General H. M., *Parliamentary Practice* (an introduction to Parliamentary Law), published by Century Publishing Co., New York City.

Slaker, Awana K., *The Main Motion*, used by the Nebraska Federated Clubs.

Sherman, Mary Belle King, *Parliamentary Law and Rules of Procedure*.

Using These Circulars in Club Meetings

The business activities in some clubs may be such that one or more meetings may be devoted to studying this circular. Other clubs may desire to devote only fifteen to thirty minutes of several meetings to its study. To assist clubs with the latter plan the circular has been divided into sections. Where a club is carrying a heavy schedule it may be advisable for the leader to have this study during the first part of the meeting, for example, if the meeting is called for 1:30 o'clock the leader who is to conduct the study will hand out the circulars promptly at that time to those present and the study will follow on the section for the day. It is well to have each member place her name on her circular, then at the close of the period the leader collects all of the circulars and keeps them until the next study period. Each member is given her own circular at the last study. After this circular has been studied, the group will find a text on parliamentary work more useful.

(This circular prepared by Mary-Ellen Brown. Read and approved by F. M. Gregg.)