

business), the notice, if necessary, can interrupt pending business or any other pending motion; the notice is also in order when another person has been assigned the floor but has not yet begun to speak, and is in order even after it has been voted to adjourn, provided that the chair has not yet declared the meeting adjourned (see also pp. 237-239).

A notice can be given and taken note of in a meeting as follows:

MEMBER A (obtaining the floor): I give notice that at the next meeting I will move to rescind the resolution adopted April 17, 19 \_\_\_\_, relating to . . .

CHAIR: Notice has been given that at the next meeting . . . [repeating the substance of the notice].

The secretary then records the notice in the minutes. If the member desiring to give the notice is unable to obtain the floor, the following variations in form can be used as appropriate to the case:

MEMBER A (rising and addressing the chair immediately after the chair has recognized another member, Mr. Y, and before the latter has begun to speak—or remaining standing if he has just sought the floor unsuccessfully): Mr. President!

CHAIR: For what purpose does the member rise [or, if Member A has remained standing after seeking the floor, “For what purpose does the member address the chair”]?

MEMBER A: I wish to give notice of the following amendment to the bylaws: “To amend Article II, Section 3, by . . .”

CHAIR: Notice has been given of the following amendment to the bylaws: . . . Mr. Y has the floor.

Instead of being given at a meeting, a notice can also be sent by mail to every member with the call of the meeting at which the matter is to come up for action, except where

the rules of the organization provide otherwise. In such a case, the member desiring to give the notice writes a letter to the secretary alone, requesting that the notice be sent with the call of the next meeting; and the secretary should then do this at the expense of the organization.

### Motion to Adopt and Motion to Ratify

A motion to *adopt* (or *accept* or *agree to*) a report or the recommendations of an officer or a committee which the assembly (by means of a main motion) directed the officer or committee to prepare is an incidental main motion. A motion to adopt or accept a report or the recommendations of a standing committee prepared on the committee's own initiative and dealing with a subject that was not expressly referred to the committee, however, is an original main motion.

A motion to adopt a resolution, bylaws, or any other document can be amended by adding, “and that it be printed and that members be furnished with copies,” or, “that it [or “they”] go into effect at the close of this annual meeting,” or anything of a similar nature (see also 50; for the adoption of bylaws see 53 and p. 564).

The motion to *ratify* (also called *approve* or *confirm*) is an incidental main motion that is used to confirm or make valid an action already taken that cannot become legally valid until approved by the assembly. Cases where the procedure of ratification is applicable include:

- emergency action taken at a regular or properly called meeting at which no quorum was present;
- emergency action taken by officers, committees, or delegates in excess of their instructions;
- action taken by a local unit which requires approval of the state or national organization; or

- action taken by a state or national society subject to approval by its constituent units.

An assembly can ratify only such actions of its officers, committees, delegates, or subordinate bodies, as it would have had the right to authorize in advance. It cannot make valid a voice-vote election when the bylaws require elections to be by ballot; nor can it ratify anything done in violation of national, state, or local law, or of its own bylaws, except that provision for a quorum in the bylaws does not prevent it from ratifying emergency action taken at a meeting when no quorum was present.

A motion to ratify can be amended by substituting a motion of censure, and vice versa, when the action involved has been taken by an officer or other representative of the assembly.

Since the motion to ratify (or to censure) is a main motion, it is debatable and opens the entire question to debate.

## SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

*See 6, pages 62 ff., for a list of these motions and a description of their characteristics as a class.*

### §11. POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

*Postpone Indefinitely* is a motion that the assembly decline to take a position on the main question. Its adoption kills the main motion (for the duration of the session) and avoids a direct vote on the question. It is useful in disposing of a badly chosen main motion that cannot be either adopted or expressly rejected without possibly undesirable consequences.

#### Standard Descriptive Characteristics

The subsidiary motion to *Postpone Indefinitely*:

1. Takes precedence over nothing except the main question to which it is applied. It is the lowest-ranking subsidiary motion and yields to all other subsidiary motions, to all privileged motions, and to all applicable incidental motions.
2. Can be applied only to the main question and can therefore be made only while a main question is imme-

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*Where there is no law, but every man  
does what is right in his own eyes,  
there is the least of real liberty.*

—HENRY M. ROBERT

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