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The
Chairman's Handbook.

Reginald F.D. Palgrave.



THIRD EDITION

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HOUSE OF COMMONS;
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THE CLERK ASSISTANT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

“That the Parliamentary constituencies may fairly appreciate the responsibilities which they impose upon their representatives, and that our households may become better acquainted with the characteristic features of the House of Commons, are the motives which have prompted this publication.”—*Preface.*

LONDON:
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1878.

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THE
CHAIRMAN'S HANDBOOK.

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THE CHAIRMAN'S HANDBOOK.

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THE
CHAIRMAN'S
HANDBOOK:

SUGGESTIONS AND RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF CHAIRMEN
OF PUBLIC AND OTHER MEETINGS, DRAWN FROM
THE PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE OF
PARLIAMENT ;

With an Introductory Letter
addressed to
The Right Honourable The Speaker
of the House of Commons.

By REGINALD F. D. PALGRAVE,
THE CLERK ASSISTANT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THIRD AND REVISED EDITION.



LONDON: KNIGHT & Co.,
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247a26 + 2



*To the Right Honourable the Speaker,
&c. &c. &c.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER,

The permission to preface with a letter addressed to you an attempt to bring into common use that method of procedure over which you with so much distinction preside, is, indeed, an honour to be acknowledged with grateful thanks. And this act of kindness on your part was the more welcome to me, because the direct object of this book is the assistance of Chairmen who, in the discharge of their duties, seek to imitate the method employed by Speakers of the House of Commons.

Following the line thus indicated, I have not tried to meet the special requirements of Board, or Public Meetings; my aim is to show, following the parliamentary method of deliberation, how Chairmen may be chosen, how they should guide discussion, and how motions are put to the vote. Rules, also, have been added defining the elementary conditions for due conduct of debate, based on Sir T. Erskine May's Treatise on Parliamentary Practice; an acknowledgment, indeed, which applies to the whole of this publication.

As the sound usage under which the House of Commons regulates deliberation is the result of English common sense, acting with precision and uniformity for at least three centuries, it may be presumed that this usage harmonises with our national cast of thought, and needs no elaborate argument to explain or to enforce its merits.

This statement, however, cannot be made wholly without reserve. The practice of the House of Commons, in one respect, is generally misunderstood. When an amendment has been proposed, Chairmen, as a rule, give priority to the amendment over the motion upon which it is moved; and they are led to do so by a belief that they are acting in exact accord with the practice which the Speakers of the House are accustomed to enforce.

In this, certainly, they are mistaken. Nor is the distinction which exists between the parliamentary and the popular treatment of an amendment, merely a technical distinction, but one involving an essential principle. An explanation of that principle may, therefore, be attempted.

When two propositions are submitted for deliberation, first a motion, and then an amendment offered as an alternative to that motion, to obtain a fair and straightforward debate, the following conditions must be observed. In the first place, if two propositions are submitted for discussion, it is essential that their consideration should be conducted, as far as possible, on equal terms; and, secondly, it is equally essential that discussion should be strictly limited to the question proposed from the chair. And how, I would ask, can these conditions be observed, if an amendment is made to anticipate the motion on which it is moved? One of two results must ensue; if the debate be kept with precision to the proposition put from the Chair, namely, the amendment, the supporters of the motion cannot be heard until the amendment is disposed of. If,

however, argument in favour of the motion be permitted, then debate strays away from the subject immediately in hand. Nor is the real point at issue, which is an alternative choice between amendment or motion, ever offered to the meeting. Even, at the best, how, under the popular method, can the advocates of a motion obtain the consideration to which they are entitled? They were foremost in the field of discussion, but they must come last; nay, their proposition may never come to the vote at all: for, as the amendment is the first to be submitted to debate, it commands the chief attention, and excludes, if accepted, the motion from decision by the Meeting.

These consequences must arise, if at the outset of the deliberation, a motion and its proposed amendment are placed in direct antagonism. The procedure adopted by the House of Commons averts this immediate conflict. The formula which the Speaker uses on such an occasion, namely,—“that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question,”—is framed for that express object: it provides a neutral ground for the discussion of a motion and the amendment, and withholds both propositions from the final vote, until the House has resolved which subject it will, in the first instance, consider.

The parliamentary system obeys that common sense instinct which dictates that it is essential, when two propositions are offered for discussion, to know, first of all, which proposition shall be discussed. And when that point is settled, then the House proceeds to determine whether or no the

subject which it has agreed to entertain for a time, shall be finally accepted.

To our ears, if I may so far identify myself with the House of Commons, the object of that phrase, "that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question," is immediately apparent. This cannot be expected of other auditors. And yet, perhaps, when the motive of that phrase is appreciated, the principle it involves may receive more general attention, as the systematic discussion, both of a motion, and of its amendment, or of an amendment to an amendment is impossible, without an adoption of that method for deliberation which is expressed in that formula used by Parliament.

With much sincerity, I must beg from the readers of this little work that kindly consideration, with which it has been distinguished by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Gladly as I would deem that my illustrations of parliamentary procedure are capable of an immediate and ready enforcement, that attractive idea is not, I fear, admissible. A system may be simple in operation, though not a simple matter to describe, and even its effective simplicity may be unapparent, without the aid of habit and experience.

If, however, a general explanation of the business method of the House of Commons be the sole result of these pages, they will not be useless. According to that eminent authority, of whom mention has been made, "the confusion which must arise from any irregularity in the mode of

putting amendments, is often exemplified at public meetings, where fixed principles and rules are not observed; and it would be well for persons in the habit of presiding at meetings of any description, to make themselves familiar with the rules of Parliament, in regard to questions and amendments; which have been tested by long experience, and are found as simple and efficient in practice, as they are logical in principle."

It is, in conclusion, my pleasant duty to acknowledge the help I have received from those Members of Parliament, who gave their kind attention to this undertaking, whilst it was in the press. Their large experience in Parliamentary and Local Administration enabled them to make suggestions of great utility; and my hearty thanks are but a slight return for the trouble they have taken, a favour of the highest value, conferred with the utmost good will.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Mr. Speaker,

Yours most faithfully,

REGINALD F. D. PALGRAVE.

*Speaker's Court,
Palace of Westminster,
May 3rd, 1877.*

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NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

SOME among the many, all most considerate, reviewers of the CHAIRMAN'S HANDBOOK have suggested that over brevity obscured, in some degree, that clearness of expression which the writer has endeavoured to attain.

Such a publication as this cannot reach even a measure of success, without the aid of varied experience ; but for help, thankfully acknowledged in the preface, the writer would hardly have ventured on the attempt at all ; and the same consideration is due towards the counsel of his reviewers. He has, accordingly, sought, in this edition, to follow the indications he has received, and, also, to meet points of difficulty in procedure on which his opinion has been asked by friendly correspondents.

1 February, 1878.

THE
CHAIRMAN'S HANDBOOK.

The Election of a Chairman.

WHEN a Meeting is prepared to commence business, its Chairman may, by a unanimous call be at once summoned with acclamation to take the Chair. If this does not take place; and if a difference of opinion prevails regarding the selection of a Chairman, it is desirable that a person who holds an influential, or official position, but who is not prepared to undertake that office, be requested to act as president until the close of the election to the Chair.

Such a president acts as Chairman for that occasion; he names those who rise to address the Meeting, and they will direct their speeches to him (*see p. 5*). His immediate duty is to keep discussion to the matter in hand, namely, to the choice of a Chairman; and that this object may be secured, he will instruct the first person who receives his call to speak to place that Question distinctly before the Meeting, by a Motion naming a Chairman taken from among those present. The Motion to that effect is, "That Mr. A. do take the Chair;" and when that Motion has been duly seconded, (*see p. 9*) that Motion is the immediate subject for discussion.

It may happen that no other name is suggested for the approval of the Meeting. In that case, when the Motion, "That Mr. A. do take the Chair" has been fully discussed, the president will put that Question to the vote of the Meeting, taken either by the voice, or by show of hands (*see p. 11.*)

Supposing, however, that it is the desire of the Meeting to consider several names, selected from among those present, as candidates for the Chair; in that case the election of a Chairman is obtained by submitting those names in succession for decision, according to the exact order in which the candidates were tendered for consideration by the Meeting.

Accordingly, after a Motion has been made and seconded, "That Mr. A. do take the Chair," and those in favour of Mr. A. have been heard, the proposers of the other candidates must rise, and move and second, "That Mr. B. (or Mr. C.) do take the Chair;" and they and their respective supporters are heard in behalf of each successive Motion. When no other name is thus submitted to the choice of the Meeting the debate has closed.

The president then, in accordance with the parliamentary method, puts to the vote the Motion which had been first proposed and seconded. He therefore rises and announces that "The Question is, 'That Mr. A. do take the Chair;'" and if that Question is agreed to, the Meeting accepts "Mr. A." as Chairman.

But if that Question be negatived, the president proceeds to put to the vote the other proposed Motions, taken in the order in which they were moved and seconded, namely, "That Mr. B. (or Mr. C.) do take the Chair;" until the election of a Chairman is decided by the vote of the majority.*

Another result is, however, within the range of possibility. It may happen that the voters, by each successive decision, put a negative upon every name proposed to them as their Chairman. Embarrassment must attend such a conflict of opinion: but a settlement of the dispute is attainable, if the Meeting consents to accept as Chairman, that person who, when his name was put to the vote, received the highest number of "Ayes," and who, therefore, was entitled to claim the largest measure of approbation.

* A procedure analogous to the election of a Chairman is the selection of one, out of several candidates, to fill a vacant office; and a few words thereon may be acceptable. One mode of effecting this selection is to submit all the candidates' names, *en bloc*, to the repeated vote of the electors, to strike off, after each successive vote, the names lowest upon the poll, and to take the final decision upon the name which, in the end, received the highest number of votes. This process is unsatisfactory, in that by each successive declaration of the numbers, the relative position upon the poll of every candidate is disclosed. Combination between the voters is thus rendered possible, so that those who, until the close of the process, were in the majority, may be, in the end, defeated by a coalition formed among their opponents.

To secure the true expression of the opinion of a majority, but one proposition, at a time, should be submitted to the "Ay" or "No" vote of a Meeting; and this advantage, at least, attends adherence to the parliamentary method of election to the Speakership.

solely in their discretion whether or no they, for their part, choose to bring the words or conduct of those over whom they preside under reprehension from the Meeting. Nor, if appealed to for their opinion upon a matter of "order," should Chairmen disregard the rule that points of "order" should be raised without delay; this rule being designed, not only for their own protection, but also to preserve Meetings from undue interruption.

Rule 11.

Matter of order arising.

Among the ordinary difficulties which beset a Chairman, one is of frequent occurrence, namely, the enforcement of the rule, that no person should speak more than once upon a Motion under discussion. And if the wording of the Motion provokes much difference of opinion, or frequent explanation, the observance of that rule may become, almost, an impossibility. It is, accordingly, desirable to meet such an occurrence by a distinct and acknowledged mode of procedure. This would be found in a Motion, "That until the close of the Meeting, the rule 'No person to speak twice to a Question,' be suspended." Or a Resolution, "That the Meeting do now resolve itself into a Committee," might be passed, as a formal indication that the debaters should be at liberty to speak as often as may be requisite.

Rule 7.

No person to speak twice to a Question.

These remarks have, hitherto, been based on the assumption, that those over whom a Chairman presides, are disposed to pay due respect to

him, and to themselves. A Chairman may, however, perceive, from the conduct of some before him, that they are resolved, by rude and violent behaviour, to obstruct the Meeting in bringing business to an orderly conclusion.

Some power of repressing such conduct must be entrusted to a Chairman. The safest and most practicable mode of attaining that object, appears to be his investment with an absolute power of causing the immediate adjournment of the Meeting. For this purpose, procedure to that effect has been embodied in a distinct and decisive rule; and it may be hoped, that a prompt and united support, which it is the right of the Chair to claim on all occasions, will be at once given to Chairmen exposed to such an emergency, as extreme disorder, by an unhesitating submission to this rule.

Rule 22.

*Chairman's
power of Ad-
journment.*

Chairmen, perhaps, may be reminded that their duties are essentially ministerial. Their words, if they rise to address the Meeting, should be kept to the explanation of their conduct, or of their opinion, as Chairmen. Nor should they attempt to sway the deliberation or the decisions of those over whom they preside. So soon as a Motion or Amendment has been duly proposed and seconded, if in order, the Motion or Amendment, must be, at once, proposed from the Chair. To this rule there is no exception. A Chairman has no option in this matter, even though the Motion be directly hostile to the whole purpose

for which the Meeting was convened ; or though he may be aware that the Amendment will thwart the intention of some of those around him.

If it seems desirable that he should propose or second Motions, such Motions should be of a formal character, and certain, by their nature, to receive a general consent. By general consent, also, the usage, that a Chairman should never address a Meeting, save as Chairman, may occasionally be set aside. It not unfrequently happens, that a Chairman is especially qualified to instruct those around him, or to exert an influence over their deliberation. That being the case, it is their part to manifest a desire to take the Chairman into their counsel. And, if this feeling be clearly exhibited, he would, in all probability, feel it his duty to comply with that desire.

The Chairman's power of voting should be limited to the casting voice, when an equality of votes takes place, *Rule 21.* in obedience to the leading principle *Chairman's Casting Vote.* of Chairmanship,—strict impartiality. The Chairmen of some Boards are, indeed, entrusted, by the constitution of the Board, with a double vote, first as a member of the Board, and then, if need be, a casting vote. But in the absence of such a rule, it is most expedient that the voting power of a Chairman should be restricted to the casting voice ; as it is expedient to maintain, in every possible way, the neutrality of the Chair.

A Motion proposed for Debate.

The Chair being filled, the attention of those around must be given to the business for which they are convened. As no Meeting should, even for an instant, be without a definite subject for deliberation, the person first to speak should commence by an indication that he is prepared to propose a Motion which he will submit to the Chairman, as a Question for debate. Then, having in his speech explained the terms and object of the Motion, and declared his intention to take the opinion of the Meeting thereon, he hands the paper upon which the same is written to the Chairman.

Rules 1, 4, 5.

Chair to be addressed standing.

Motions to be in writing, &c.

No Speech save to a Question.

Then the Chairman, in due course, immediately asks, "who seconds the Motion?" that it may be formally submitted to the Meeting; and he pauses to ascertain if any person acknowledges, by speech or sign, that he seconds the Motion. If the Motion finds no seconder, it is immediately dropped, and debate thereon must cease. When, however, a Motion has been seconded, the Chairman, at once proposes it to the Meeting in the form of a distinct Question for their deliberation.

Rule 4.

Motions, etc., to be seconded.

Supposing, accordingly, that a Motion to the following effect has been duly seconded, the Chairman rises and says,—

Chairman.—"The Question I have to propose is, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market Place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital.'"

The discussion thereof will then ensue; and it is a convenient practice if those who rise to address the Meeting are named by the Chairman, so as to assign the call to speak, alternately to an advocate and then to an opponent of the Motion. This interval between the proposal of a Motion as a Question from the Chair, and the moment when the Question is put to the vote, is also the occasion when Amendments to a Motion can be moved. (*See p. 14.*)

Rules 6, 7.

Speech to be directed to the Question.

No person to speak twice.

The Mode of putting the Question upon a Motion to the Vote.

When discussion upon a Motion has ceased; and when its proposer has had an opportunity to make his reply, the Chairman puts the Motion as a Question for the decision of the Meeting.

Rules 9, 12.

Right of reply.

No speech after question fully put.

He rises and says—

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market Place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital.'"

The Vote given by Voices.—The Chairman proceeds to take the vote of the Meeting by the Voice. To do so, he first desires,—“*As many as are of that opinion say ‘Ay.’*” He then makes a distinct pause, whilst he hearkens to the voices given in the affirmative. When he has received an answer, and those in favour of the Motion have distinctly said, “Ay,” he completes the process by desiring—“*As many as are of the contrary opinion say ‘No.’*”

The Chairman pauses again to receive the voices given in the negative.

Supposing that not a single voice is heard to answer “No,” or if the Chairman judges from the sound of the voices asserting “No,” that the “Noes” are fewer in number than the “Ayes,” he expresses his opinion upon the vote of the Meeting by announcing deliberately, but not decisively, that—“*I think the ‘Ayes’ have it.*” This he does in order that any one of the Meeting may compel, if he desires it, a vote by show of hands.

The Chairman, therefore, again makes a marked pause, that he may ascertain how that statement is received before he declares his final decision.

If the Chairman’s statement that, as he thought, “the ‘Ayes’ have it,” remain unchallenged; that is to say, if no counter assertion is heard, if no voice retorts back immediately and distinctly—“The ‘Noes’ have it;”—the Chairman will

clench the matter, and declare, decidedly, and with emphasis, that—" *The 'Ayes' have it.*"

The Question having been, by the Chairman's final declaration, resolved in the affirmative, it has become the Resolution of the Meeting; and he concludes by reading aloud the Motion in his hand, prefacing it with the word, "*Resolved,*"—as for instance, "*Resolved, That tenders be invited for the erection of a New Infirmary,*" &c.

The rejection of a Motion is obtained by acting in the manner just described, though to the contrary effect.

We must, therefore, revert to the commencement of the process, to the Chairman's direction that "As many as are of that opinion say 'Ay.'" If not one voice was then heard to answer "Ay," or if the "Ayes" from the sound of their voices, seem fewer in number than the "Noes," the Chairman pronounces an opinion upon the negative vote thus given by the Meeting, and announces distinctly, though but tentatively, that, "*I think the 'Noes' have it.*"

As, again, that statement is not final but open to question by the vote by show of hands, the Chairman pauses to indicate that he awaits the challenge. And then, if no challenge comes, if no one affirms aloud, "The 'Ayes' have it," the Chairman decisively declares his final decision, that—" *The 'Noes' have it,*" and he thus announces to the Meeting, that the Question has passed in the negative.

The Vote given by a Show of Hands.—A vote by show of hands is obtained by challenging the Chairman's opinion regarding the voices of the Meeting. *Rules 20, 21.* If his statement that he thought that either "the 'Ayes,' or "the 'Noes' have it," is met by a distinct and positive challenge, even from a single voice, he must direct that the vote be taken by a show of hands. *Correction of error in vote by show of hands.* He appoints a teller for the "Ayes," and a teller for the "Noes," who will make their report to him in writing. *Chairman's Casting vote.* The two tellers rise and meet together so as to be ready to act; and then the Chairman directs each person, who, during the vote by voices, had exclaimed "Ay," or had otherwise shewn himself to be in favour of the Motion, to rise and hold up a hand. Then the tellers count the number of hands held up, and put the number down in writing; this done, they inform the Chairman that they have recorded the number of the "Ayes." He then directs each person who had called out "No," or had testified his opposition to the Motion, to rise and hold up a hand. The "Noes" are then numbered and recorded in the same way; and the tellers place their report before the Chair. Then the Chairman, holding in his hand the tellers' report, rises and announces the number of the votes which have been given for, and then the number against the Motion, and he gives effect to the consequent decision of the Meeting. *Rule 17. Motions already decided, not to be renewed.*

Amendments to Motions.

The Object of Amendments.—Amendments to a Motion must be relevant thereto. Amendments may be defined as consisting of two kinds, the one, namely, intended not for the absolute subversion of the Motion, but for the purpose of modifying the language, or the scope thereof, in order that the same may be thereby rendered more acceptable.

The other kind of Amendment is designed for the purpose of placing a contradiction more or less direct, upon the principle expressed by a Motion, or upon one of the objects for which it is proposed. To attain this result an alternative proposition, running counter, either wholly, or partially to the original Motion, is offered, by way of amendment, for the acceptance of the Meeting.

To this end, a sentence declaring the motives which actuate the opposers of the Motion is proposed in substitution for those passages which, for that purpose, it is essential to remove. The usual form which such an Amendment takes, is a paragraph so framed as to make a coherent sentence when placed in combination with the first word of the Motion; as though the design of its opposers may be the entire contradiction of the Motion, still, obviously it would be irregular to move the complete rejection of a sentence which is being dealt with by amendment. (*For an example of this form of Amend-*

ment see p. 26.) In the same way, an Amendment tantamount solely to the absolute negation of a Motion, such as a proposal to interpolate the word "not,"—as for instance, "That tenders be" *not* "invited," &c.—is an improper form of Amendment; for the vote of "No" when the Question is put from the Chair, is the due mode of giving the direct negative to a Motion.

Time for Moving Amendments.—The opportunity for moving an Amendment to a Motion arises after the Motion has been proposed as a Question for consideration, and before it has been put to the vote. And directly that an Amendment has been moved and seconded, the Chairman must rise and propose from the Chair the form of Question which the Amendment occasions. (*See p. 19.*)

A person who has moved, seconded, or spoken upon a Motion, cannot again rise and move to amend the same, as no one may speak twice to a Question, save in explanation or reply.

If several Amendments are to be moved upon a Motion, the Chairman should be informed of the nature of those Amendments; and then he will call upon their proposers to move the Amendments in such an order, as will secure the coherence of the Motion, when finally agreed upon.

But, although it is desirable that such an arrangement should be followed, still, if the

Rule 4.

*Amendment
to be in
writing, and
seconded.*

Rules 18—15.

*Order of
Amendments.*

proposers of intended Amendments neglect to rise in due course, a person who is speaking upon a Question before the Meeting has the right to move an Amendment thereto at any point open for the purpose, which he may select; and, if the Amendment be in order, the Chairman is bound to propose the Question thereon; although, by so doing, the intention of a portion of the Meeting may be frustrated.

Amended Motions to be intelligible.

No Amendment to an amended portion of a Motion.

Still, occasionally, to make room for an Amendment to an earlier portion of the Motion, which would, under Rule 15, be excluded, Amendments are, by consent, for the time withdrawn.

Rule 19.

Motions, etc., withdrawn.

The re-proposal of an Amendment, however, involves the following technical irregularity.

The mover of the withdrawn Amendment, when he first proposed it, spoke while the Question upon the original Motion was before the Meeting; he does so again when the opportunity recurs for the renewal of his proposal, and he thus infringes the rule forbidding more than one speech upon a Question.

But it has been felt, that this rule might well be relaxed in favour of one who has given way to suit the convenience of others; and on that account it is suggested that the mover of a withdrawn Amendment should be entitled to re-propose the same; but without a repetition of the arguments he had previously adduced.

The Mode of Putting the Question upon Amendments.

The preface to this book contains a statement of the principle enforced by the parliamentary method of treating Amendments.

The practical application of that method is as follows:—namely, by putting, in succession, several Questions, first to define the form of words to be discussed, and then to dispose finally of those words, either in their original, or in their amended shape.

To elucidate this explanation, a working example must be given. This example is supplied by the parliamentary treatment of that class of Amendment which involves these two distinct propositions—the omission, firstly, of words from a Motion, and then the substitution, in their place, of other words. By the first Question which arises upon such an Amendment the House determines whether “*the words proposed to be left out*” of the Motion, shall, or shall not, “*stand part of the Question*” under discussion. If the response made by the House is to the effect that the words to be left out *shall* stand part of the Question, the Amendment is negatived. For that decision showed, that the House prefers to discuss the Motion as it was expressed in the first instance.

This choice, however is not final, but only for the purpose of debate; it, therefore, remains

to be seen if the House will accept the un-amended Motion, and, accordingly, no further Amendment being moved, the Speaker, in conclusion, submits the Motion, in its original form, to the ultimate decision of the House.

Supposing, however, that the reverse took place, and that it was determined, that the words "*proposed to be left out*" shall not "*stand part of the Question.*" As those words are thereby struck out, a blank or vacant place is made in the Motion. The Speaker accordingly places a second Question before the House to ascertain whether that blank shall be filled up by the words of the Amendment; Amendments to that Amendment may then be considered; and the process ends by submitting the Motion, in its altered form, to the final vote of the House.

Amendments are divisible into three classes, namely:

1. An Amendment, by leaving out words.
2. An Amendment, by adding words.
3. An Amendment, by leaving out words, to procure the insertion of other words.

The method by which each class of Amendment is proposed from the Chair and put to the vote, will be found exemplified in the following illustrations. And Chairmen may be again reminded, that they are bound, so soon as an Amendment is seconded, to put the Question thereon to the Meeting.

CLASS I.—**An Amendment by leaving out Words.**—In the case of an Amendment by the omission of certain words—of a proposal, for instance, to leave out from the Motion, “That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary, &c.” the words, “*the Market Place of;*”

The Chairman rises, and prefaces the Question thus :—

Chairman.—“The original Question was this, ‘That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market-place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital;’ since which an Amendment has been proposed to leave out the words, ‘the Market-place of;’

The Question I have to propose is, That the words, ‘the Market-place of,’ stand part of the Question.”

And this Question is put to the vote in the manner described (*see p. 11.*)

If the Question be resolved in the affirmative, as that decision keeps the words, “the Market-place of,” standing in the Motion under deliberation, the Amendment is negated. No alteration, accordingly, can be made to the Motion prior to the words, “the Market-place of;” and—if no subsequent Amendment be offered—the Chairman puts the Question in its original form :—

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market-place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital.'"

If, however, the first Question, "That the words, 'the Market-place of,' stand part of the Question," passes in the negative, the Amendment is made; these words are rejected from the Motion; and then—if no subsequent Amendment be offered—the Chairman puts the Question on the Motion as amended:—

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital.'"

CLASS 2.—**In Amendment by adding Words.**
—In the case of a proposal to add words,—such, for instance, as an amendment of the Motion "That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary, &c.," by the addition, after the word "invited," of the words—"by *public advertisement* ;"

The Chairman rises, and prefaces the Question thus:—

Chairman.—"The original Question was this, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market-place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital;' since which an Amendment has been proposed, to add after the word 'invited' the words, 'by public advertisement ;'

The Question I have to propose is, That the words, 'by public advertisement,' be there added."

The next proceeding is to put that Question to the vote. Supposing that it is negatived, and that no subsequent Amendment is proposed, then the Chairman puts the Question upon the Motion in its original form :—

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market-place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital.'"

If, however, the Question, that those words be there added, is resolved in the affirmative, as the Amendment has been agreed to, the Chairman puts the Question upon the amended Motion :—

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That tenders be invited, by public advertisement, for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market-place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital.'"

CLASS 3.—An Amendment by leaving out Words, in order to insert other Words.

An explanation has been given (*p.* 17) of the principle and object of parliamentary procedure upon this class of Amendment. The practical application of that method is as follows :—it shall be supposed that the Amendment proposed to the Motion, "That tenders be invited, &c.,"

is the omission therefrom of the words, "*to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital,*" and a substitution instead of—"and that such Infirmary shall be managed by a *Visiting Committee;*"

The Chairman rises, and prefaces the Question thus :—

Chairman.—"The original Question was this, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary in the Market-place of Stafford, to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital,' since which an Amendment has been proposed to leave out the words, 'to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital,' in order to insert the words, 'and that such Infirmary shall be managed by a Visiting Committee,' instead thereof ;

The Question I have to propose is, That the words, 'to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital' stand part of the Question."

The proposed Amendment is assumed, for the purpose of illustration, to be the wish of the majority. Under this supposition, the words, "to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital" are struck out of the Motion, the Question thereon having passed in the negative.

The Chairman therefore puts the following Question :—

Chairman.—"The Question is, That the words, 'and that such Infirmary shall be managed by a Visiting Committee,' be there inserted ;"

And that Question is, accordingly, agreed to.

Those words, therefore, having been inserted, the Chairman, in conclusion, calls for a decision upon the Motion so amended :—

Chairman.—“ The Question is, ‘That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary, in the Market-place of Stafford, and that such Infirmary shall be managed by a Visiting Committee.’ ”

The Chairman's second proposition,—“ That the words, ‘and that such Infirmary shall be managed by a Visiting Committee,’ be there inserted,”—might, however, be rejected. The blank created in the Motion, by the omission of the words, “to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital,” would thereby be kept open. This, it may be presumed, was not the intention of the Meeting, and that the attempt to fill up that blank will be continued, another form of words being proposed with that object.

The Chairman, accordingly, when such other words had been proposed and seconded, would take the opinion of the Meeting regarding their introduction into the Motion, by putting the Question, “That the words ‘. . . .’ be there inserted.” And this proceeding may be continued until it was settled how the blank in the original Motion should be filled up.

That these efforts, in the end, prove fruitless is, nevertheless, a possible contingency : it might

happen that no words, offered to supply such a blank, prove acceptable. The Chairman, however, if the Motion is not withdrawn, must put the Question thereon as it stood, although still in that incomplete condition.

For example, reverting to the Motion used for illustration, if no method of filling up the blank caused by the omission of the words, "to be placed under the Medical Staff of the County Hospital," could be agreed upon, the Chairman would conclude by calling for a decision on the Motion so amended :—

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary, in the Market-place of Stafford.'"

It will be noticed, that in the above case, the Question forms a complete and intelligible sentence, although the words struck out remain unsupplied.

Such a proceeding might, however, render a Motion under deliberation perfectly unintelligible; yet, as no Motion can be withdrawn without unanimous consent, if that consent be refused the Chairman has no option, and he must put the Motion, in that fragmentary state, to the vote; when, as a matter of course, it would be negatived.

This casualty has occurred in parliamentary practice. A Motion before the House of Commons has even been reduced to a single word; as the House, having negatived all the words

of the Motion after the first word "That," negatived, in succession, every proposition designed to supply that deficiency. The Speaker, however, felt that he could not propose the word "That" as a Question from the Chair, and passed on to the matter which stood next upon the Order Book.

The withdrawal of a Motion thus rendered unintelligible, is the most judicious course to be adopted in this emergency.

The mode of putting the Question upon Amendments to Amendments.

Amendments may be offered to an Amendment, whilst the Question upon that Amendment is under proposal from the Chair. Thus, when this Question was before the Meeting—"That the words, 'and that such Infirmary shall be managed by a Visiting Committee,' be there inserted," that sentence itself became open to amendment: words might have been substituted for words standing therein, or it might have been altered either by omission, or addition.

As the proposal of an Amendment to an Amendment involves a new proposition, the Question which is created by that new proposition must be immediately disposed of, before the Question of amending the original Motion can be approached. An Amendment, when subjected to alteration, is therefore taken up at once,

and is treated throughout in the same way as if it were the original Motion, upon which an Amendment had been moved. The original Motion, accordingly, is laid aside, and the Amendment itself becomes, for the time, the substantiative Question, to be dealt with separately, until its terms are settled. The Chairman puts the Question, that amending words be added to the Amendment, or, that words proposed to be left out, "stand part" of the Amendment; and, in conclusion, he puts the Question for the acceptance, or the rejection of the Amendment, either in its original, or in its amended form.

Procedure on an Amendment to an Amendment.—A Meeting has before it, it may be supposed, this Motion—"That a Finance Committee be now appointed," and that an Amendment has been proposed, to leave out from the first word "That," to the end of the Motion, to add, instead, "*it is inexpedient to sanction, at present, any further expenditure.*"

And as this illustration treats of amending an Amendment, it shall be presumed that the first Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," has been decided in the negative.

All the words of the original Motion after the first word "That" being thus struck out,—the second Question is, "That the words, 'it is

inexpedient to sanction, at present, any further expenditure,' be added to the word 'That' in the original Question."

The proposal of this Question from the Chair forms the point when an Amendment can be moved to those words, "it is inexpedient to sanction, at present, any further expenditure." That Amendment, accordingly, might be to leave out from that sentence, the words "*at present,*" and to insert, instead, the words, "*during this year.*"

Procedure on such an Amendment is as follows :—

Chairman.—"The original Question was this, That the words, 'it is inexpedient, at present, to sanction any further expenditure,' be added to the word 'That,' in the original Question; since which an Amendment has been proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out the words 'at present,' in order to insert the words 'during this year' instead thereof;

The Question I have to propose is, That the words 'at present' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

If that Question be agreed to, the words "at present" are retained in the Amendment; and the Chairman returns to the Question he first proposed, namely :

Chairman.—"The Question is, That the words 'it is inexpedient, at present, to sanction

any further expenditure,' be added to the word 'That' in the original Question."

And then, that Question being also agreed to, the Chairman to obtain the final decision of the Meeting, puts the Motion so amended, to the vote, namely :—

"The Question is, 'That it is inexpedient, at present, to sanction any further expenditure.'"

Supposing, however, that the first Question—"that the words 'at present' stand part of the proposed Amendment"—be negatived, the Chairman proceeds to put the following second Question :

Chairman.—"The Question I have to propose is, That the words, 'during this year,' be inserted, instead thereof."

If that be agreed to, then the Chairman takes the opinion of the Meeting upon the Amendment as amended ;

Chairman.—"The Question is That the words, 'it is inexpedient, *during this year*, to sanction any further expenditure,' be added to the word 'That' in the original Question ;"—and that being agreed to, the Chairman concludes by taking a final decision upon the amended Motion ;

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That it is inexpedient, during this year, to sanction any further expenditure.'"

An Amendment amended by the omission of Words.—Another illustration may be given of a mode of amending an Amendment.

An Amendment, it may be supposed, has been moved to leave out a paragraph from a Motion. The majority, however, desire to retain a portion of the sentence proposed to be omitted, and to negative the remainder. That being the case, they will obtain that result by proposing to amend the proposed Amendment by leaving thereout the passage which it is intended should be retained ; and the restoration of those words to their place in the original Motion is thereby effected. The mode of arriving at this conclusion can be thus exemplified.

The following Motion is taken by way of illustration :—“ That the Superintendents of Police, being superior officers, be appointed Inspectors under the 75th section of ‘ The Explosives Act, 1875 ;’ and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act, if appointed as officers by any Local Authority.” And the Amendment moved to that Motion shall be supposed to be as follows,—namely, to leave out from the words “ 1875,” to the end thereof.

The Question, therefore, is proposed :—

“ That the words ‘ and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act, if appointed as officers by any Local Authority,’ stand part of the Question.”

The majority of those present, however, wish to retain the words, "*and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act.*" In that case they would propose to leave those words out of the proposed Amendment.

The following Question would, accordingly, be put :

Chairman.—"The original Question was this, That the words, 'and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act, if appointed as officers by any Local Authority,' stand part of the Question; since which an Amendment has been proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out the words, 'and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act.'"

The Question I have to propose is, 'That the words 'and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act,' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

It may be supposed, following the selected example, that the majority desire to retain those words. The Question that those words "stand part of the proposed Amendment," is therefore negatived; and those words are, accordingly, restored to the original Motion.

That being decided,—the Chairman, accordingly, returns to his former proposition, but in its amended form; and calling for a decision upon the Amendment, as amended, namely, upon the

words, "if appointed as officers by any Local Authority," he puts the following Question :

Chairman.—"The Question is that the words, 'if appointed by any Local Authority,' stand part of the Question."

As the majority are supposed to be adverse to those words, that Question is negatived. The Chairman therefore puts the final Question upon the Motion, as it has been altered by the amended Amendment.

Chairman.—"The Question is, 'That the Superintendents of Police, being superior officers, be appointed Inspectors, under the 75th section of the 'Explosives Act, 1875;' and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act.'"

An attempt to alter an Amendment, after it has been proposed from the Chair, not infrequently creates perplexity and embarrassment. And the best escape from this difficulty is the division of an Amendment, which causes a difference of opinion, into several separate Amendments, so as to place the sentences open to objection *seriatim* before the Meeting.

For instance, to revert to the last illustration. If the Chairman were permitted to put the Question upon the sentences to be omitted, first upon the words, "and that the Serjeants of the Force be permitted to carry out the provisions of the Act;" the vote would have been that those words should "stand part of the Question."

Then the Meeting would agree upon the omission of the concluding words of the Motion; and, finally, the Chairman would put the Question on the Motion so amended; and thus, the object sought by a proposal to amend a proposed Amendment, can be obtained in a simpler way.

Motions for Adjournment, and the “Previous Question.”

The decision of a Meeting upon Motions, or Amendments may be withheld from determination by Motions for an Adjournment of the Meeting, or of the Debate, or That the Chairman do leave the Chair.

The proposal of these Motions is, like the proposal of an Amendment, governed by the rule forbidding more than one speech upon a Question. Motions for Adjournment, &c., cannot, therefore, whilst a Motion is before the Meeting, be proposed or seconded by those who have spoken on that Motion, or by those who have moved or seconded an Amendment thereto. Nor can Motions for Adjournment, &c., whilst an Amendment is under discussion, be moved or seconded by those who have spoken on that Amendment.

After that Motions for Adjournment, &c., have been proposed from the Chair, persons who have already spoken on the original Motion are

at liberty to speak again, as a new Question has thereby been placed before the Meeting.

These remarks, also, apply to the proposal of the "Previous Question." The object thereof, it may be explained, is to withhold a Motion from the vote, but without such interference in the course of business as is caused by Motions for Adjournment, or for the Chairman's leaving the Chair. Direct opposition, though in an indirect way, being the intention of the "Previous Question," it does not debar advocates or opponents from entering fully into the merits and demerits of the Motion against which it is proposed.

The "Previous Question," can only be moved, when the Question upon an original Motion is before the Meeting, and cannot be moved upon an Amendment. Nor can an Amendment be offered to a Motion after the "Previous Question" has been proposed. But if an Amendment has been disposed of, either by withdrawal, or by the vote of the Meeting, when the original Motion, in its first or in an altered form, is finally proposed from the Chair, then it can be met by moving the "Previous Question."

The form offered for use is not that employed by the House of Commons. The writer has ventured to accept the guidance of a precedent recorded about 250 years ago upon the Journals of the House, as the ancient form is, for the following reason, to be preferred.

According to present usage, Members who propose the "Previous Question," move that the Question which they oppose "be now put;" and then they vote against their own Motion. This is a perplexing method. The form tendered for adoption, namely, "That the original Question be *not* now put," in effect reverses the parliamentary form; it shows clearly the object of the Motion; those who move it, vote "Ay," and those who oppose it, vote "No."

And it follows, accordingly, that if the "Previous Question" put in the proposed form, be negatived, that the original Motion should immediately be "now put." The Chairman, therefore, must put that Question to the vote, without suffering further debate, or the proposal of any Amendment thereto.

Motions for Adjournment, or, That the Chairman leave the Chair, and the "Previous Question," being formal Motions, used for a certain and definite object, cannot be amended. When, however, Motions for the Adjournment of the Debate, or of the Meeting, not for the purpose of defeating a Motion, but for its *bonâ-fide* postponement are accepted, then a second Question arises, as to the moment when that proceeding shall be resumed; and this is a Question which may be amended regarding the day or hour, when the debate shall be recommenced.

The Question put on Motions for Adjournment, &c.—A Chairman proposes Questions on

a Motion for Adjournment, or for his leaving the Chair, as soon as such Motion has been moved and seconded, as a new Question, without any reference to the Motion then under debate ; he, therefore, rises and says :—

Chairman.—“ The Question is, That this Debate (or this Meeting) be now adjourned : ”—or, “ The Question is, That the Chairman do leave the Chair.”

The Question put on the Previous Question.—The “ Previous Question ” is proposed, with the prefatory words which are used in proposing an Amendment :

Chairman.—“ The original Question was this, ‘ That tenders be invited for the erection of a new Infirmary, &c., ’ since which the ‘ Previous Question ’ has been proposed ;

The Question is, ‘ That the original Question be not now put.’ ”

And if no debate occurs, the Chairman, at once, puts these Questions to the vote.

The Withdrawal of Motions and Amendments.

The withdrawal of a Motion is thus obtained. The proposer of the Motion must rise before the Question thereon has been fully put, and intimate his desire that the Motion should be withdrawn ; the

Rule 12.
Question fully put.

Chairman then formally asks of the Meeting, "Is it your pleasure that the Motion be withdrawn?" And if no person objects to that proposal, the Chairman completes the withdrawal of the Motion by announcing that, "The Motion is, by leave, withdrawn."

Rule 19.

Motions withdrawn.

When Motions contingent upon an original Motion, such as for its Amendment, or Adjournment, the "Previous Question," or "that the Chairman do leave the Chair," have been moved, the Chairman must first take the opinion of those present, expressed in the manner described, regarding the withdrawal of such contingent Motion. Nor, unless that proposal be unanimously answered in the affirmative, can the Chairman propose the withdrawal of the original Motion. If, however, the Amendment, or Motions for Adjournment, &c., be negatived, then a proposal to withdraw the original Motion can be entertained.

The Consideration of a Report from a Committee.

When a Meeting is called upon to consider the Report of a Committee, the first step is to read aloud the Report, and this may be done, either from the Chair, or by some one upon the direction of the Chairman.

This stage is the formal first reading: its object is to make the Meeting acquainted with

the contents of the Report, and is, therefore, a proceeding not open to debate or opposition.

The second stage, which follows in due course, directly that the Report has been read, is a Question proposed from the Chair, "That the Report be read a second time."

This proposition affords an opportunity for raising a discussion upon the general tenor of the Report, and is open to amendment, but only to relevant Amendments, expressive of opposition to the scope, or object of the Report, or for the postponement thereof, or for its recommitment, either to the former, or to another Committee.

When the Question, "That the Report be read a second time," is agreed to, opposition thereto, as a whole, must cease; and the Report itself is placed before the Meeting for verbal amendment: discussion and procedure, therefore, must now be directed strictly to that object; and, if deemed expedient, the Report may be again read aloud, paragraph by paragraph, to facilitate the proposals of Amendments thereto; such Amendments being restricted merely to the modification of the wording of the Report.

This opportunity having been afforded to the Meeting, the final Question to be put by the Chairman, is, "That the Report (in its original or amended form) be agreed to."

And then, if the Report be agreed to, such Motions as are necessary to carry out its object, should be immediately submitted to the consideration of the Meeting.

Rules of Procedure.

Chair to be addressed standing.

1 A person desiring to speak must rise in his place, and address himself to the Chair; and no interruption to his speech should be permitted, except upon a point of "order" suddenly arising.

Chairman's call to speak.

2 When two or more persons rise to speak, the Chairman calls upon the person who first rose in his place; and order is best maintained by acquiescence in the Chairman's decision.

Motion that a person "be now heard."

3 A Motion may be made that a person who has risen to speak, "be now heard."

Motions to be in writing, and seconded.

4 All Motions and Amendments must be seconded; and, except formal Motions, such as, "That the Chairman do leave the Chair," Motions and Amendments should be handed to the Chairman in writing.

No speech save to a Question.

5 No speech should be permitted, save to a distinct Motion, either already submitted to the Meeting as a Question for deliberation, or to be so submitted by the person speaking.

6 Each person who rises to speak, *Speech to be directed to the Question.* must direct his speech to the Motion under discussion, or to a Motion or Amendment to be proposed by himself, or to a Question of order.

7 No person may speak twice to a Question, except in explanation or reply. *No person to speak twice to a Question.*

8 A person, who has spoken, may be again heard, to clear up misunderstanding in regard to some material part of his speech; but he is not to introduce new matter; nor is he to interrupt, for the purpose, a person who is speaking. *Explanation allowed.*

9 A reply is allowed to the mover of a substantive Motion, but not to the mover of an Amendment, of Motions for Adjournment, or "That the Chairman do leave the Chair," and of the "Previous Question." *Right of reply.*

10 Motions for Amendment, Adjournment, "That the Chairman do leave the Chair," or the "Previous *New Questions.*"

Question," are new Questions; and persons who have spoken on the original Motion, may speak again, after such new Questions have been proposed.

Matter of order arising.

11 Any person may claim to speak upon a matter of "order," suddenly arising, and the person who was then addressing the Meeting should thereupon resume his seat; but a point of "order" must be raised, as soon as possible, after the occurrence of the provocation.

No speech after Question fully put.

12 After a Question has been fully put, that is to say, when a Question has been put from the Chair, and the voices have been given thereon, both in the affirmative and the negative, no person may speak.

Order of Amendments.

13 Amendments to a Motion must be moved in the order in which, if agreed to, they would stand in the Motion, if amended.

Amended Motions to be intelligible.

14 Every Amendment should be relevant to the Motion upon which it is moved, and should be framed so as

to form therewith an intelligible and consistent sentence.

15 No Amendment may be proposed to that portion of a Motion which is prior to a point where an Amendment has occurred, or has been proposed from the Chair, unless the proposed Amendment has been, by leave, withdrawn.

No Amendment to an amended portion of a Motion.

16 No Amendment may be proposed to be made to words which it has been resolved shall stand part of, or be added to a Question, except by the addition of other words.

No Amendment to words agreed upon.

17 No Motion or Amendment may be proposed, which is the same, in substance, as a Motion or Amendment which has, during the pending discussion, been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

Motions, &c., already decided, not to be renewed.

18 If the Previous Question be negatived, the Question on the Motion to which it has been moved, is to be put immediately, without Amendment or discussion.

When Previous Question negatived.

19 Motions and Amendments may be withdrawn, leave being granted

Motions, &c., withdrawn.

without any negative voice, before the Question on the Motion, or Amendment, has been fully put.

Correction of error in vote by show of hands.

20 During a vote by a show of hands, in case of misunderstanding concerning the number of hands held up, a second vote must be taken ; if such misunderstanding cannot otherwise be corrected.

Chairman's casting vote.

21 In case of an equality of votes, the Chairman must give the casting vote.

Chairman's power of Adjournment

22 If disorder should arise, the Chairman, acting on his discretion, as a matter of right, can quit the Chair, and announce the Adjournment of a Meeting ; and, upon his doing so, the Meeting is immediately adjourned.

Authority of Chairman.

23 Deference should be paid to the Chairman's authority. Silence, also, must ensue, and the person speaking immediately resumes his seat whenever the Chairman rises to speak, that his words may be heard without interruption.

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