

**Filling Blanks.** (See pp. 105) 4. Propositions for filling blanks are treated somewhat differently from other amendments, in that any number of members may propose, without a second, different names or numbers for filling the blanks, no one proposing more than one name or number for each place, unless by general consent. These are treated not as amendments, one of another, but as independent propositions to be voted on successively. If the blank is to be filled with a name, the chair repeats the names as they are proposed so all may hear them, and finally takes a vote on each name, beginning with the first proposed, until one receives a majority vote. If the blank is to be filled with several names and no more names are suggested than required, the names may be inserted without a vote. If more names than required are suggested, a vote is taken on each, beginning with the first, until enough to fill the blank have received a majority vote. If the number of names is not specified, a vote is taken on each name suggested, and all that receive a majority vote are inserted.

**If the blank is to be filled with a number or a date, then the largest sum, or the longest time, or the most distant date, is put first, unless it is evident to the chair that the reverse order is necessary to enable the first vote to be taken on the proposition that is least likely to be adopted.** Suppose a committee is being instructed to purchase a building for a blank amount: the voting on filling the blank should begin with the largest sum proposed; if that is lost, all who voted for it, and some others, would favor the next largest sum, so that the vote would be greater, and so on down to the largest sum that is favored by a majority. If the voting began with the smallest sum, every one would be willing to pay that amount, and it might be adopted and thus cut off voting on the other propositions, whereas a majority would prefer authorizing the committee to spend a larger amount. On the other hand, suppose the committee was being authorized to sell a building for a blank amount: here it is evident that there would be more in favor of the large sum than of the small one. So to get at the wish of the assembly the voting should begin with the smallest sum proposed; all who are willing to sell for that amount, and some additional ones, will be willing to sell for the next larger sum; and so the smallest sum for which the majority is willing to sell will be gradually reached.

It is sometimes convenient to create a blank, as in the following example: A resolution is pending requesting the proper authorities to prohibit the erection of wooden buildings north of A street, and an amendment to strike out A and insert B, and an amendment of the second degree to strike out B and insert C, have been made. The debate developing the fact that several other streets have their advocates, the best course is for the chair to state that, if there is no objection, the motion would be treated as having a blank for the name of the street, and that A, B, and C have been proposed for filling the blank. In this way other names could be suggested and they would be voted on successively beginning with the one that made the prohibited area the largest, and continuing down until one was reached that could get a majority in its favor. If objection is made to leaving a blank for the name, the chair may put the question without waiting for a motion, or any one may move, as an incidental motion, that a blank be created for the name of the street. This motion is undebatable, and cannot be amended, but it may be moved to fill the blank by ballot or in any other way.

The blanks in a resolution should be filled usually before voting on the resolution. But sometimes, when a large majority is opposed to the resolution, the previous question is ordered without waiting for the blanks to be filled, thus stopping debate and further amendment, and bringing the assembly at once to a vote on the resolution. Under such circumstances the resolution would usually be rejected. But should it be adopted, it would be necessary to fill the blanks in the skeleton resolution before any other than privileged business would be in order.

The method adopted in filling blanks has sometimes a great advantage over ordinary amendment. In amending, the last one proposed is the first one voted on, whereas in filling blanks the first one proposed, or nominated, is voted on first, except where, from the nature of the case, another order is preferable, and then that order is adopted as explained above.