

Attention to parliamentary procedure is on the rise

By MARGARET MILLER

Parliamentary procedure interest and expertise are on the upswing after a period of hard times.

Proof of the trend can be found in the numbers and enthusiasm of the club president and parliamentary students who gathered for a recent leadership workshop on the subject in Southfield.

And an explanation comes from Mrs. Grace Banks, Redford Township club leader and now vice president of the Detroit unit of the National Association of Parliamentarians.

"It's a fascinating study when you get into it," she said. "You are learning all the time."

"And besides that, we're running out of registered parliamentarians, and organizations like the Business and Professional Women need them for their state and national conventions."

"That's an interesting job, and you can charge a good fee."

THE WAY to parliamentary expertise involves first a test to become a member of the NAP. Mrs. Banks said, and later a comprehensive examination to become a registered parliamentarian.

"Most of us in the Detroit group are studying now to prepare for that test," Mrs. Banks said.

"It takes two days, so besides being

prepared you have to find the time to take it."

The group meets the third Wednesday of each month, she said, in the headquarters of the Federation of Women's Clubs, at 15000 Franklin, Detroit. There is study from 11 a.m. to noon, then a bag lunch and a short business meeting, and then more study until 3 p.m.

"We practice all the time," Mrs. Banks said. "We learn how to say motions, how to open and close meetings—all kinds of things like that."

THERE'S COMMON SENSE behind the complications of parliamentary procedure, according to Mrs. Lorraine Buckley, national vice president of the parliamentarian organization and leader of the recent workshop.

Mrs. Buckley, a resident of Independence, Mo., dealt particularly with ranking motions in a business meeting and likened them to a ladder with the main motion on the bottom rung.

"You work up the ladder in purpose and down when you take the votes," she told the women. "If you can get a pattern of what this is all about, you are on the way to being a good presiding officer."

MRS. BUCKLEY used a diagram to show the order of ranking motions above the main motion.

Going up her ladder, she mentioned motions to postpone indefinitely, the main motion, amend it, commit or refer it, postpone it definitely to a certain time, extend debate, call the previous question or lay the motion on the table.

These must be kept in order, she said, and she put each motion through a check list to comment on its objective, whether it requires a second, whether it may interrupt a speaker, whether it can be debated or amended, what it yields to the vote required, and whether it can be reconsidered or applied to the main motion.

THE SPEAKER showed what she meant by the common-sense aspects of parliamentary procedure by pointing out that a motion to commit or refer should mention what committee should receive the proposal, how many members it should have and when it should make a report.

If you don't include all that there has to be amendments and that takes time," she said.

She added that to be effective a committee for action should be small, a committee for investigation should be large, and in either case a committee should represent factions both favoring and opposing the motion in question.

Such a committee, she explained, can in its report "try to anticipate the objections the assembly may have and can try to overcome them."

Parliamentary law, she stated, is supposed to expedite business, and it does it by doing things the proper way.

GRACE BANKS said the chance to learn the proper way was her reason for joining the organization of parliamentarians.

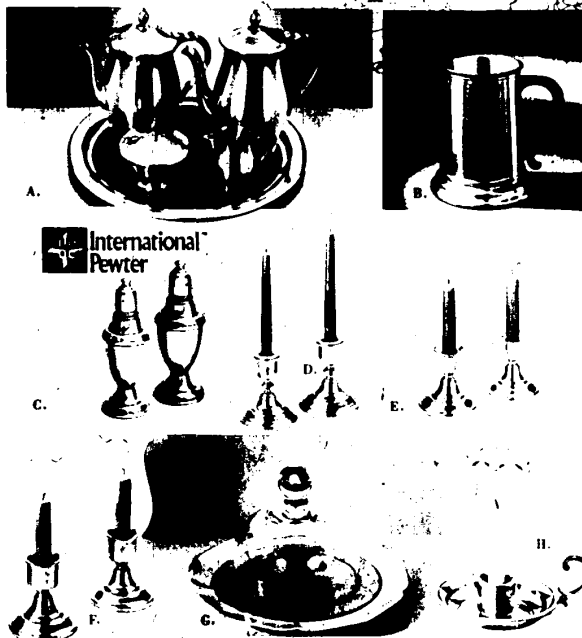
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