

6. No brother can speak oftener than the rules permit, but this rule may be dispensed with by the Master, if he sees good reasons for doing so.

7. No one is to disturb the speaker by hissing, unnecessary coughing, loud whispering, or other unseemly noise, nor shall he pass between the speaker and the presiding officer. All of these are breaches of decorum for which the offender may be called to order.

8. No personality, abusive remarks, or other improper language should be used by any brother in debate. If he do, he should be immediately called to order by the presiding officer or any other member.

9. If the presiding officer rise to speak while a brother is on the floor that brother should immediately sit down, that the presiding officer may be heard.

10. Every one who speaks should speak to the question. This is perhaps the most important of all the rules of order, because it is the one most necessary for bringing the debate to a satisfactory conclusion. To speak impertinently, therefore—that is, to speak to points not pertinent and relevant to the subject under discussion—is always viewed as a gross violation of the rules of order. But commensurate with its importance, is the difficulty of determining when violated. It is entirely within the discretion of the master of the Lodge to decide how far a member should be indulged in a line of argument not precisely within the scope of the question under discussion. The principle has been laid down by an experienced authority, Mr. Speaker Cornwall, of the English House of Commons, that “no matter introduced into a debate, which the question before the House cannot decide upon, is regularly debateable,” and this may be considered as a correct expression of the rule. No Subject should be introduced into a debate, the merits of which could not be decided by the question under discussion, and by that alone.

11. As a sequence to this last rule, it follows that there can be no speaking unless there be a question before the Lodge. There must always be a motion of some kind to authorize a debate.

These rules of order are so absolutely necessary to the decorous conduct of a discussion and to its successful conclusion, in the resolution and determination of the question which is its subject-matter, that every member is deeply interested in its observance. The duty of maintaining them belongs, it is true, in a peculiar manner, to the presiding officer, who should ever be on the alert to detect and check any breach of them. But it is also the privilege as well as the duty of every other member to exercise the same vigilance.

When a breach of order has occurred which has escaped the notice of the chair, or even before the chair may have had time to check it, any member may call the attention of the presiding officer to the violation of the rule. To do so, he will rise from his seat and say, “I rise to a point of order;” upon which the Master will request him to state his point, the speaker objected to having taken his seat, where he remains until the point of order is decided. The point being stated either orally, or, if required by the chair, in writing, the Master gives his decision, whether a violation of the specified rule of order has been committed or not. If the latter, he says, “The point is not well taken,” and directs the speaker to resume his argument. If the former, he says, “The point is well taken,” and either prevents the speaker from further discussion, if it is the discussion itself that is objected to as being out of order, or