

The Presiding Officer.

The duty of the person in the chair, no matter what the name of the office may be, is to preside, to maintain order, to make decisions as to points of order and to give a casting vote in an election. The presiding officer, or as we shall say for convenience, the President of the Meeting, should never under any circumstances speak to a motion while occupying the chair. Unless it is expressly forbidden in the Constitution, there is no objection to the presiding officer expressing an opinion, but before doing so the chair should be vacated in favor of the vice-president, or whoever would act in the absence of the President. This is a very important matter, more so than many people realize. Many meetings are unduly influenced by expressions of opinion from the chair, and these are wholly out of order. Any member of an organization who wishes to draw attention to the president violating this rule, should rise, and addressing the chair, say, "I rise to a point of order," and it will be a very obtuse president indeed who will not immediately acknowledge the mistake, and either cease to discuss the matter, or vacate the chair in favor of some one else while so doing. The presiding officer should however, avoid the discussion of any subject, and the more strictly the presiding officer adheres to this rule, the better it will be for the meeting. I think there is no doubt that women presiding officers are more prone to this error than are men, probably from the reason that the members of women's organizations are either too lax or too timid to check up the presiding officer who is guilty of this breach of rules. When it becomes necessary for a presiding officer to give a decision, it should be done by saying, "The Chair rules so and so." Excepting in very extreme cases, a ruling of the chair