

4. Alice F. Sturgis, Learning Parliamentary Procedure, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1953
5. Gregg Phifer, "Parliamentary Authority in Voluntary Organizations," Parliamentary Journal, July, 1967, p. 6.

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### BOOK REVIEW

by Marshall Soren, CPP

Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure  
(Second Edition), Alice Sturgis, McGraw-Hill, N.Y.,  
1966, 283 pages. \$4.95

Since the publication of the first edition of this book in 1950 it has been adopted by quite a few organizations as their parliamentary authority. However, if the book was intended to replace Robert's Rules as the standard in the field, it has obviously failed. There is no question, however, that it has stimulated thought on modernization of the terminology and rules of parliamentary procedure as has no other single volume. In terminology the motions to table and previous question are changed to "postpone temporarily" and "vote immediately." Take from the table becomes "resume consideration." The rules themselves are changed in minor ways: fix the time to which to adjourn and call for the orders of the day are both eliminated by alternative procedures requiring no special classification.

Since the substantive changes from Robert's Rules are few, the question arises why any organization would choose this authority over Robert. The answer is (1) the book is written in clear, concise, modern English, and is much easier to follow than Robert, (2) it has eliminated the worst roadblocks to understanding parliamentary procedure and (3) it truly simplifies procedure. If the book is that good, the logical next question to arise is, why all organizations should not choose this authority. The answer is that the points covered in the book almost demand Robert to explain their possible complications. Sturgis

apparently believes that the intricacies of procedure, not covered in her volume, can be handled by the parliamentarian or the chair without the uniformity of a rule. It is at that point of greatest need, when it is floundering on an obscure procedural point, that an organization requires an answer from its parliamentary authority. Where Sturgis may fail, Robert will probably have an answer. As a further drawback the terms vote immediately and postpone temporarily have not become popular. "Close debate" is certainly heard more today than "vote immediately" and is probably more popular than "previous question" itself.

Sturgis says she bases her own parliamentary rules on court decisions and cites six pages of legal authorities as footnote references. These decisions being so few, her unacknowledged debt to Robert is clear. The author has improved on Robert by setting up a permanent advisory board to revise the text periodically. That is a fine idea. Unfortunately, the first sixteen years of Sturgis have not led to noticeable revision. Sturgis has additional material in the new edition but changes in the original text are hard to find, if any. The fault probably is with the advisory board itself, which is made up of thirty-three distinguished persons, of whom less than half are distinguished in the field of parliamentary procedure.

My remarks should not be misinterpreted into condemnation of this book. On the contrary, this book is so well conceived and well written, that no professional parliamentarian should fail to read Sturgis. For those interested in improving and modernizing parliamentary procedure (such as AIP members), Sturgis Code is a starting point. Robert's archaic terminology and obtruse prose style certainly need revision. Sturgis has made a valiant and professional pioneering effort in that direction.\*\*\*

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Funk & Wagnalls Book of Parliamentary Procedure by Lawrence W. Bridge. A Funk & Wagnalls paperback. 180 pages. 95¢. A reprint of the 1954 hardcover. Reviewed in Parliamentary Journal, January 1965.