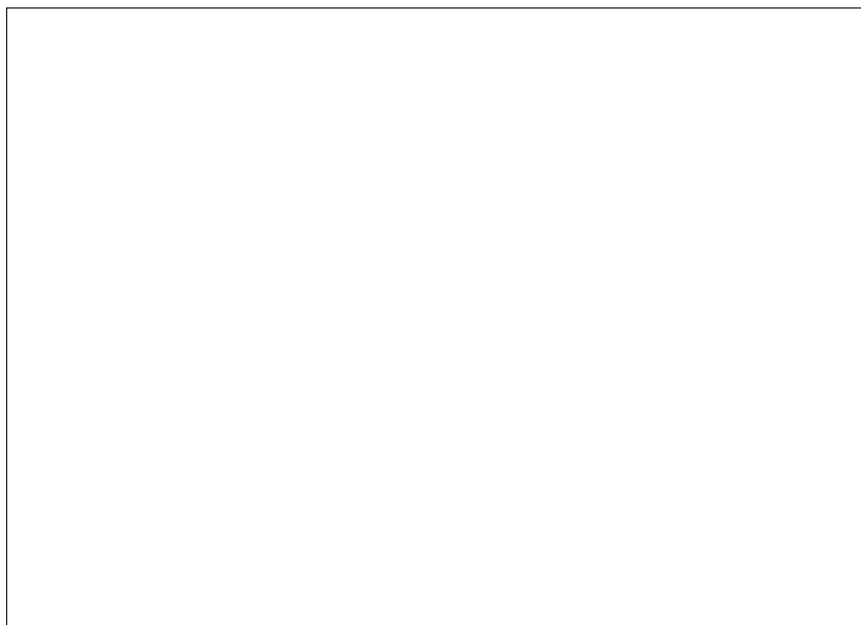




RAJYA SABHA
PRACTICE & PROCEDURE SERIES

8

CALLING ATTENTION



CALLING ATTENTION

F. No. RS. 17/5/2005-R & L

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**RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

PUBLISHED BY SECRETARY-GENERAL, RAJYA SABHA AND PRINTED
BY MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS,
MINTO ROAD, NEW DELHI-110002.

PREFACE

This booklet is part of the Rajya Sabha Practice and procedure Series which seeks to describe, in brief, the procedure of 'Calling Attention' in Rajya Sabha. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha and the actual practice obtaining in the House. The booklet is intended to serve only as a handy guide for ready reference and the information contained in it is not exhaustive. For full and authentic information original sources may be referred to and relied upon.

NEW DELHI;
February, 2005

DR. YOGENDRA NARAIN
Secretary-General

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Introduction

The concept of 'Calling Attention' is of Indian origin. It is an innovation in the modern parliamentary procedure and combines the asking of a question for answer with supplementaries and short comments in which different points of view are expressed concisely and precisely, and the Government has adequate opportunity to state its case. It gives members an opportunity to bring to the surface the failure or inadequate action of Government on a matter of urgent public importance. This procedural device is analogous to an adjournment motion without its censure aspect.

Provision in the Rajya Sabha Rules

Rule 180 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business which deals with the calling attention to matters of urgent public importance, reads:

- (1) A member may, with to any previous permission of the Chairman, call the attention of a Minister to any matter of urgent public importance and the Minister may make a brief statement or ask for time to make a statement at a later hour or date:

Provided that no member shall give more than two such notices for any one sitting.

- (2) There shall be no debate on such statement at the time it is made.
- (3) Not more than one such matter shall be raised at the same sitting.
- (4) In the event of more than one matter being presented for the same day, priority shall be given to the matter which is, in the opinion of the Chairman, more urgent and important.
- (5) The proposed matter shall be raised after the questions and the laying of papers, if any, on the Table and before any other item in the list of business is taken up and at no other time during the sitting of the Council.

In pursuance of certain decisions taken at the meeting of Rules Committee, General Purposes Committee and leaders of parties/groups in Rajya Sabha, the following procedure and practice regarding Calling Attention, has been adopted :

- (i) All Calling Attention notices received for a day during a week in which that day falls are kept alive during the whole of that week and placed before the Chairman for his consideration from day to day along with notices received up to 10.30 a.m. on the day on which the notices are put up to him.

- (ii) On the last day of the week on which the House sits, the notices received upto 10.30 a.m. on that day are considered and notices which are not selected lapse and no intimation about this is given to the members.
- (iii) Notices received after 10.30 a.m. on the last day of the week on which the House sits are deemed to have been received for the day on which the next sitting of the House is to be held and these are valid for the following week.
- (iv) Not more than two notices of Calling Attention may be given by a member for one sitting.
- (v) A member who initiates a Calling Attention may not take more than 7 minutes and other members who are called by the Chairman should not take more than 5 minutes each and should restrict themselves strictly to seeking clarifications on the Calling Attention.
- (vi) Where a Calling Attention notice stands in the name of a number of members, in choosing members who desire to seek clarifications the first principle adopted is party/group. After exhausting the parties/groups, whose members have given the notice by calling one member from each party/group, the chairman may call members belonging to parties/groups not included in the list.

- (vii) A member whose Calling Attention notice has not been selected during a week may renew the same for subsequent week(s). In such a case, the date and priority of the notice is taken as the date and time at which the renewal notice is received in the Secretariat from the member concerned and no consideration is given to the previously lapsed notice of Calling Attention on the same subject.
- (viii) The normal time to be spent on a Calling Attention is about an hour so that it should conclude at 1.00 p.m.

Calling Attention procedure in actual practice

A member who intends to call the attention of a Minister to a matter of urgent public importance has to give notice thereof in writing in the prescribed form available in the Notice Office. All notices received from members up to 10.30 a.m. are placed before the Chairman everyday for his consideration by the Secretary-General. The Chairman decides the admissibility of the Calling Attention notice. The concerned Minister and the members in whose name the Calling Attention notice is admitted are informed accordingly.

An item of the admitted Calling Attention is included in the list of business in the names of all those members whose notices on that subject are alive and the *inter se*

priority of members is determined according to the time of receipt of all those notices.

It is not necessary for the Chairman to admit Calling Attention notice for every sitting of the House. Admission of notice is subject to the rules and ultimately to the decision of the Chairman that the matter sought to be raised does call for an early statement from the Minister.

Generally, the 'Calling Attention' is taken up immediately after the Question Hour and laying of papers, if any, but sometimes the Calling Attention may be taken up later in the day, subject to the direction of the Chair and the consensus arrived at in the House.

The member whose name is first in the list of business rises in his seat when called upon and calls the attention of the Minister by reading out the item from the list of business. At that time he does not make any statement.

Thereafter, the Minister makes a statement in response to the Calling Attention. Copies of the proposed statement of the Minister are made available to members just before the Minister commences his statement. Under the rules, no debate is permitted on such statement at the time it is made. However, members are permitted to seek clarifications on the statement. For this purpose, the Chairman calls members party-wise *i.e.*, one member from each party/group. In other words, members are not called in the order in which

their names appear in the list of business. It is also not obligatory on the Chairman to call all those whose names appear in the list of business. After the members to whom the Chairman has permitted have sought clarifications, the Minister replies.

Ordinarily, the Calling Attention is concluded before lunch-break, but there have been occasions in the past when the discussion on a Calling Attention had gone beyond lunch-break or took the whole day or even next day depending on the importance of the subject and desire of the House. There were occasions also in the past when after a Minister had made a statement, members were permitted to seek clarifications thereon the next or the subsequent day.