TALK ON "ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER IN CONDUCTING A MEETING"

Reported by: Ir. Gary Lim Eng Hwa, Deputy Chairman of the Building Services Technical Division

The evening talk conducted by Mr. G. Sivalingam on 1 September 2004 shed some light on the often mystifying subject of Parliamentary Procedure. Even if the talk did not cover even a tenth of this complex subject, the participants (close to 40 of them) at least went away with a flavour of the subject, enough for them to build further on it, by reading up on the appropriate reference material. The talk touched on various aspects of parliamentary procedure such as quorum, proper voting methods and the concept of using motions to control what is discussed by an assembly.

The intricacies of what is needed for truly democratic decisions to be made in an assembly were briefly discussed, but more importantly, the correct way of handling main motions were discussed. Practical exercises at the end of the talk helped to bring the various types of subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions to life, especially since selected participants got to play the role of assembly members. Among the exercises was the demonstration of how the need for a seconder for a motion automatically takes care of attempts to bring ridiculous motions before the assembly. Another exercise demonstrated how motions can be lined up one after another like a train, and how they could be handled systematically and fairly.

All in all, the evening ended on a high note, even though the session ended a little late, and a number of participants gathered around the speaker to ask additional questions and clarify their doubts. ■

Shaiky's View

"....TODAY I HAVE INSTRUCTED THE CONTRACTOR TO PLEASE AVOID ALL UNNECESSARY ACCIDENTS AND CONCENTRATE ONLY ON THE NECESSARY ONES...."