Module 10

Levels of the Legion and Elections

Legion

CONTENT OUTLINE

MODULE NAME	Levels of the Legion and Elections
MODULE CHAPTERS	Levels of the Legion Running Elections
MODULE AUDIENCE	This module will assist the Chairman, the Chief Scrutineer and Elections Chairman in properly conducting elections at any level of Legion. It will also inform all members on the Legion's various levels of governance.
MODULE DESCRIPTION	This module will outline the structure of the Legion. It will also help members understand the modern democratic process by focusing on voting and election procedures.
DURATION OF MODULE REVIEW	Members can anticipate taking up to two hours to review all module content; the practical application of the knowledge will reinforce this material.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	Members will be able to explain the multi-level structure of the organization and be able to demonstrate their understanding of the election process by effectively holding an election in their branch.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION DOMINION COMMAND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
MODULE 10

LEVELS OF THE LEGION

INTRODUCTION
There are THREE (3) basic levels in Legion: Branch, Provincial Command, and Dominion Command. These are the levels for which Charters are issued.

Every Provincial Command is divided into a combination of Zones and/or Districts. These levels are administrative arms of a Provincial Command, and operate under the direction of the Provincial Command.

BRANCH AUTONOMY
The primary unit of the Legion is the Branch and each Branch exercises autonomy with regard to its affairs, within the bounds as outlined in the General By-laws of The Royal Canadian Legion. The Branch has power to make By-Laws and regulations to govern its activities so long as they are consistent with the Act to Incorporate, General By-Laws of The Royal Canadian Legion and the By-Laws of their Provincial Command. In many cases before taking effect, Branch By-Laws or amendments require prior approval by Provincial Command.

DISTRICT COMMAND / ZONE COMMAND
The Provincial Command shall be organized into such districts and/or zones as the Command Council may from time to time determine.

The District/Zone is subject to the jurisdiction of the Command and shall embrace all Branches within its territorial limits as set forth by the Command.

District/Zone Meetings will be held as provided for in the District/Zone By-Laws.

Each District/Zone shall elect a slate of Officers for a two-year term by simple majority vote at a meeting held in accordance with Provincial Command Bylaws.

PROVINCIAL COMMAND
A Provincial Command will have jurisdiction over the branches, district/zones contain within their geographical area.

Provincial Commands create and maintain bylaws, elect officers, operate Legion programs and provide support as needed. Districts and Zones play an important role in promotion of programs and assistance of branches.

A review of the Bylaws of your Provincial Command will provide a greater knowledge of your command, its duties and responsibilities to you and your branch.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

The following are a series of steps you may find useful in conducting your Branch elections. It is recommended that the Elections Chairman should be familiar with this section before the election.

1. You will need to determine that everyone in the room is a VOTING MEMBER OF THIS LEGION BRANCH.

2. Identify Non-voting members and guests. Have them sit in a separate section of the room, if possible.

3. Have someone such as the Sgt-at-Arms count the number of eligible voters.

4. The Membership Chairman should be able to indicate those members in good standing who are in attendance. Be careful not to embarrass a member who may not be in good standing. Consider posting a notice that all members, especially potential candidates for office, should be sure to have their dues paid to date before the election.

5. The Assistant Sgts-at-Arms should ensure that all entrances can be tiled. Additional persons may be needed to ensure all exits from the meeting room.

6. If there is a Nomination Committee have the Committee Chairman provide a list of candidates for the election, to the Elections Chairman before the election begins.

7. At the beginning introduce the election team, including the Chief Scrutineer, the Scrutineers, the Sgt-At-Arms and anyone else directly involved in the election. Do not introduce the candidates at this time.

8. Issues arising during the election, if any, will be handled first by referring to your Branch By-laws and from there, if required, to Provincial or Dominion Command By-laws.

9. No person will be allowed to leave or enter the hall once the doors have been tiled. Following the collection of each ballot and after the scrutineers have left the room, the door will be un-tiled.

10. No person will be nominated for any position unless they are present and have accepted the nomination; or if absent have signified their intention in writing. Letters of intent should be turned over to the Election Chairman before the balloting process begins, preferably at the beginning of the election meeting. Letters of intent should only be considered after the member has been nominated for the office stated in the letter. It is not necessary for the Election Chairman to read aloud the letter of intent.

11. The order of the election of Officers will be done in accordance with the bylaws governing the voting body being elected, such as Branch, District, Zone or Command.

12. Only one office will be elected at a time. Begin each ballot by reading the names of those previously nominated (by a nomination committee or at a previous meeting). Nominations will then be opened for that office and the Elections chairman will call for nominations three times. Nominations do not require seconding.

13. After the third call, nominations will cease and voting will take place if necessary. If there is time, the Elections Chairman may introduce each candidate and provide them with a few minutes to speak to the delegates.

14. Voting on all ballots will be by secret ballot.

15. Unless otherwise provided for in bylaw, elections will be run on the simple majority system, meaning that a candidate will be declared elected if they receive a 50% plus 1 of the votes cast for that office. Example: if there are 51 delegates the successful candidates will need 26 votes.

16. If three candidates are in contention for an office, the winning candidate must have at least 50% plus one of the votes cast in order to be elected. If there is no clear winner on the first ballot, the candidate with the least number of votes will be dropped and a second ballot will be held between the two remaining candidates. Check Branch By-laws for any variance.

17. If four or more candidates are seeking an office, check with your Branch or Command bylaws for the proper procedure. In the event that no bylaw exists the following is suggested: If the total number of ballots received by the two candidates with the least votes, is less than the number of votes received by the third lowest candidate, than the two candidates with the least number of votes will be dropped. If the number of ballots is higher than the number received by the third lowest candidate, than only the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be dropped.

Example: Sam has 5 votes, John has 7 votes and Henry has 15 votes, (Sam and John combined have 12 votes, Henry has 15), then Sam and John would both be dropped from the list of candidates and the election will continue.

18. The election of each office will follow until all offices have been filled.

19. In the event that an office is not filled, the bylaws will be consulted.

20. After the balloting has been completed for all offices, the Elections Chairman will seek a motion to destroy the ballots. The Elections Chairman will thank all who participated in the elections and the elections committee members and declare all offices filled.

ELECTIONS

The following may be used as a step by step method to conduct Legion elections. As Elections Chairman it is your responsibility to ensure that everyone understands the election procedure.

- -

INTRODUCTION

The Presiding Officer for this election should read aloud the procedures to be used for the election. Questions should be welcomed. You may wish to paraphrase.

Indicate that if discrepancies are noticed, they should be brought to the attention of the Election Chairman immediately and not after the elections have been completed. As Elections Chairman you may request that the officers vacate their chair at the head table during the election process. The recording Secretary and Chairman/President should remain at their stations if business will be considered during the counting of ballots.

The order of elections is: President; Vice President(s) in order of rank; Secretary; Treasurer and Executive Committee Members, usually 6-10 (you may need to consult your bylaws for the correct number). Additional officers may be elected based on your By-Laws.

1. Announce the name Chief Scrutineer
   _____

   and two additional scrutineers:

   _____

   _____

   Request motion of approval for above.

2. Have all non-voting members, including Guests and Observers, move to the side or rear of the hall.

3. Request Sgt-At-Arms to count and advise of eligible voting members.

   Delegates total is: _____

4. Explain rule of majority: 50% plus one. Total voting Strength: _____ Divided by 2 = _____ ballots needed to win.

5. Have ballots ready! If the ballots are in book form, it is acceptable to distribute the ballot ahead of the opening of nominations. If the ballots are loose they should be distributed after the doors have been tiled and only as many as the delegate is entitled to, in most cases it will be one only.

6. Open floor for nominations for the first office to be elected, usually President. There will be three calls, at the end of the third call, declare nominations closed for this office. If a Nominating Committee was assigned obtain names of candidates from the nominating chairman or from the Secretary, before opening floor for additional nominations.

7. Read names from top down, then from bottom up, ask for their intention to either run or decline.

8. If time permits. Introduce each candidate and allocate up to three minutes for individual presentations.

9. All entries and exits shall be barred or tiled.

10. All ballots will be collected in containers. The Election chairman will ask if everyone has voted. When the ballots are all collected, the doors will be un-tiled and the scrutineers will retire to a separate room to count the ballot.

11. Only after the results have been reported by the Elections Chairman to the meeting will the other scrutineers then be permitted to enter hall.

12. The Chief Scrutineer reports in writing only, with counted ballots in closed container, to the Elections Chairman. (the Elections Chairman retains the used ballots after each vote).

   The Chief Scrutineer shall report the total ballots cast _____, the number of spoiled ballots _____, the name of the successful candidate _____.

   If no candidate has received the required majority, the name of the candidate(s) to be eliminated

   _____

   _____.

   NOTE: at no time will the actual number of ballots received by a candidate be announced or discussed in any way, during or following the election by anyone.

13. The Elections Chairman will announce to the meeting the information provided by the Chief Scrutineer. Only the number of cast ballots, the number of spoiled ballots and the name of the successful candidate or the candidate(s) which will be dropped from the ballot.

14. When the successful candidate has been elected, proceed with remaining elections, starting with number 6.

15. After Last election, request motion: 'To destroy all ballots'!

16 Declare that all required offices have been elected.

17. Express appreciation for the co-operation of the delegates during the election procedure and thank the Chief Scrutineer Comrade _____ and the other scrutineers Comrades _____and

   _____.

18. Turn the meeting back over the Chairman/President.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION
ELECTIONS REPORTING FORM

ELECTION RESULT FOR THE OFFICE OF:

_____

Please note: The Chief Scrutineer shall report directly to the Presiding Officer in writing, (on this form) of the result of each ballot. The scrutineers following this report shall then be permitted to enter the hall for distribution and collection of the next ballot.

NAME:_____

NAME:_____

NAME:_____

NAME:_____

NAME:_____

NAME:_____

NAME:_____

TOTAL NUMBER OF BALLOTS CAST:
_____ _____

NUMBER OF SPOILED BALLOTS:
_____

NAME OF MEMBER DECLARED ELECTED:
_____

IF NO MAJORITY, NAME OF CANDIDATE(S) ELIMINATED:
_____

_____

_____

_____

PROCEDURE FOR ELECTIONS – DOMINION CONVENTION

The following are the electoral rules and procedures used during a Dominion Convention. They are provided here for guidance and direction.

ELIGIBILITY

Ordinary, Associate and Affiliate-voting members who are accredited delegates and no one else are entitled to vote and carry proxies.

PROXIES

The General By-Laws concerning proxies are as follows:

911   Any delegate, accredited by the branch of which he is a member, may carry, in addition to his own credentials, up to four proxy credentials.   These proxies may be from any branch or branches within his own provincial command.

912   Proxies must be registered at the opening of the convention, and may only be used when a ballot vote is required.

913   Every proxy, to be valid, shall include a credential certificate naming the delegate entitled to register such proxy.

PRESIDING OFFICVER

The Presiding Officer, for the purposes of elections, shall be a Past President or other past officer as appointed by the Dominion President. The Presiding Officer shall be properly attired in Legion dress.

The Presiding Officer shall ensure that there are sufficient duty Legionnaires under the supervision of the Sgt-At-Arms to control all exits and entrances to the convention hall.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for offices will be called for on the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of the convention.

At a time to be determined by the Procedures Committee, nominations for all offices will be declared open by the Presiding Officer who will do so by reading to the convention the following message prior to calling for nominations for the first time:

ELECTION PROCEDURES

"Comrades, as your appointed Election Chairman, I do declare nominations open for the offices of President, First Vice-President, Dominion Vice Presidents, Dominion Treasurer and Dominion Chairman".

Nominations shall be made orally by accredited delegates from the floor of the convention for each elective office in order of precedence.

No person shall be nominated unless he is present and accepts the nomination or has signified in writing his willingness to accept such office. The nominee will be asked to stand up and identify himself.

The names of the candidates shall be posted in order of nomination.

On the second and third business day, at a time to be determined by the Procedures Committee, the Presiding Officer shall reopen nominations. Nominations shall be called three (3) times and then closed. The Presiding Officer shall read the names of the nominees in order of nomination. On second reading, in reverse, the nominees will state their intention.

Nominations will be declared open for the next office after each office has been filled.

Unsuccessful candidates for the office of President shall be automatically nominated for the office of First Vice-President.

In addition to other nominees, all unsuccessful candidates for the office of First Vice-President shall be automatically nominated for the office of Vice-President.

Candidates automatically nominated for any position may, of course, decline as they so choose.

- -

BALLOTING
Ballots will be issued to Provincial Secretaries in bulk and will be issued to delegates at the time of registration, after credentials have been verified.

All candidates, if available, will be introduced to the convention prior to balloting.

Election shall be by ballot except in cases of acclamation.

The Presiding Officer shall declare which ballot is to be used for each office. Exits and entrances are to be tiled until all ballots have been collected. No balloting is to take place unless there is sufficient time to complete it.

The Presiding Officer shall answer all points of order relating to election procedure. All other points of order shall be referred to the Dominion Command Chairman, who shall be available.

Elections will be held for the following offices in this order:

> President
> First Vice-President
> Vice President (3 to be elected)
> Treasurer
> Chairman

When balloting is for the election of a single officer, the candidate receiving the majority of the votes cast shall be elected.

When balloting is for the election of more than one officer in a multiple delegate position, delegates will use the First Past the Post voting system.

Details are outlined in sections 916 and 917 of The General By-Laws.

The Chief Scrutineer, with his staff, will count and recount the ballots, if necessary, checking against the report of the Credentials Committee. Further counts may be required to resolve any discrepancies. Ballot counting will be done in a room separate from the convention hall.

The Chief Scrutineer will complete the election return form and report the result of the ballot to the Presiding Officer, who in turn will report to the convention. The Presiding Officer shall announce the number of ballots cast, the number of ballots spoiled and the result without disclosing the count for each candidate.

After announcing the final results for an office, the Presiding officer shall cause the doors to be opened for a brief period, then continue with the laid-down procedure.

Only one office will be balloted on at a time. Once every office has been filled, the Presiding Officer will ask for a vote authorizing the destruction of ballots and the dismissal of scrutineers (very important).

- -

ELECTORAL PERSONNEL
The responsibility for the orderly conduct of the election rests with the Presiding Officer. He will be assisted by a Chief Scrutineer who will be a Past Dominion Officer appointed by the Dominion President; if possible, a non-staff member as Deputy; a Dominion Command staff member (usually the Director of Finance); and Scrutineers from each Provincial Command / Special Sections. The duties of these officers are as follows:

The Presiding Officer
a. Explains to the delegates the procedure to be followed.
b. Calls for elections, office by office.
c. Before each election, calls three times for nominations.
d. Orders the Sergeant-at-Arms to have the doors tiled before the vote is taken, and kept closed until all the votes have been gathered. Announces the names of candidates in the order in which they have been nominated.
e. Announces the result of the vote. If there are only two candidates, he announces the winner. If there are more than two candidates, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated and the Presiding Officer gives the names of those still in the running.
f. Calls for a vote authorizing the destruction of ballots and the dismissal of scrutineers.

The Chief Scrutineer
a. Instructs the scrutineers in their duties.
b. Oversees the return of ballots from the floor to special containers.
c. Oversees the safe delivery of containers to the room set aside for counting ballots.
d. With the help of his deputy, of scrutineers and of the staff members, counts the ballots, checking with the report of the Credentials Committee.
e. Reports the result of the ballot to the Presiding Officer in writing on the form provided for this purpose. He will sign the form.

The Deputy Chief Scrutineer
Under the control of the Chief Scrutineer supervises the collection of ballots and the subsequent ballot count.

The Dominion Command Staff Member
Finalizes the count of the ballots and reports the totals to the Chief Scrutineer.

The Scrutineers
a. Collect ballots and carry them to containers set aside to receive them.
b. Assist in conveying containers to the room where ballots will be counted.
c. Assist the Chief Scrutineer in counting the ballots.