

Under Section 95, the Parliament of Canada may make laws in relation to agriculture and immigration concurrently with provincial legislatures although federal legislation is paramount in the event of conflict. An amendment to the BNA Act in 1951 (Br. Stat. 1950-51, c.32) authorized the Parliament of Canada to make laws in relation to old age pensions in Canada subject to the proviso that no such law should affect the operation of any provincial laws in relation to old age pensions. By the BNA Act, 1964 this amendment was extended to permit the payment of supplementary benefits, including survivors and disability benefits irrespective of age, under a contributory pension plan.

**The passage of legislation.** If a bill is introduced and approved in the House of Commons, it is then introduced in the Senate and follows a similar procedure. If a bill is first introduced in the Senate, the reverse procedure is followed. There are three types of bills: public bills introduced by the government; public bills introduced by private members of Parliament; and private bills introduced by private members of Parliament. Each type is treated in a slightly different manner, and there are even differences in procedure when the House deals with government bills introduced pursuant to "supply" and "ways and means" motions on the one hand, and other government bills on the other. The following outline describes the procedure for a government bill introduced in the House of Commons.

The sponsoring minister gives notice that he intends to introduce a bill on a given subject. Not less than 48 hours later he moves for leave to introduce the bill and that the bill be given first reading. This is granted automatically because this first step does not imply approval of any sort. It is only after first reading that the bill is ordered printed for distribution to the members.

At a later sitting the minister moves that the bill be given second reading and that it be referred to an appropriate committee of the House of Commons. A favourable vote on the motion for second reading represents approval of the bill in principle so there is often an extensive debate, which, according to the procedures of the House of Commons, must be confined to the principle of the bill. The debate culminates in a vote which, if favourable, results in the bill being referred to the appropriate committee of the House, where it is given clause-by-clause consideration.

At the committee stage, expert witnesses and interested parties may be invited to give testimony pertaining to the bill, and the proceedings may cover many weeks.

The House committee prepares and submits a report to the House of Commons which must decide whether to accept the report, including any amendments that the committee has made to the bill. At the report stage any member may, on giving 24 hours notice, move an amendment to the bill. All such amendments are debated and are usually put to a vote. Following that, a motion "that the bill be concurred in" or "that the bill, as amended, be concurred in", is put to the vote.

After this report stage, the minister moves that the bill be given third reading and passage. Debate of this motion is limited to whether the bill should be given third reading. Amendments are permitted at this stage but they must be of a general nature, similar to those allowed on second reading. If the vote is favourable, the bill is introduced in the Senate where it goes through a somewhat similar though not identical process, since each House has its own rules of procedure. The bill is then presented to the Governor General for Royal Assent and signature. Depending on the provisions in the bill itself it may come into force when it is signed by the Governor General, on an appointed day, or when it is officially proclaimed.

**Duration and sessions of Parliaments.** The length and sessions of the first to the 12th Parliaments, covering the period from Confederation to 1917, are given in the 1940 *Canada Year Book* p 46; of the 13th to the 17th Parliaments in the 1945 edition, p 53; of the 18th and 19th Parliaments in the 1957-58 edition, p 46;