

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 chamber has its own rules of procedure. After the bill has been passed by both houses, it is given royal assent by the Governor General or by his deputy, one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada. The assent ceremony takes place in the Senate chamber in the presence of representatives of both houses of Parliament. The bill comes into force as soon as it is assented to, unless there is a provision in the bill stating that it will come into force on the day on which it is officially proclaimed.

Duration and sessions of Parliaments. The length and sessions of the 27th to the 31st Parliament, covering the period from January 1966 to December 1979, are given in Table 3.1, along with the opening of the 32nd Parliament. Similar information of the period from Confederation to 1917 (the first to the 12th Parliament) is given in the *Canada Year Book 1940* p 46; of the 13th to the 17th Parliament in the 1945 edition, p 53; of the 18th and 19th Parliaments in the 1957-58 edition, p 46; of the 20th to the 23rd Parliament in the 1965 edition, p 65; and of the 24th to the 26th Parliament in the 1975 edition, p 132.

The Senate

3.3.1

The Senate is responsible for the protection of the various provincial, minority and sectional interests in Canada. While the composition of the House of Commons is based on the principle of representation by population, Senate membership is based on the principle of equal regional representation.

This feature of the Senate is reflected in its make-up. The Senate has 104 seats distributed on a regional basis: Ontario, 24; Quebec, 24; the Maritime provinces, 24 (10 each from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and four from Prince Edward Island); Newfoundland, six; the Western provinces, 24 (six each from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia); and Yukon and Northwest Territories, one each.

Senators are appointed, in the Queen's name, by the Governor General on the advice of the prime minister. To qualify for appointment to the Senate, a person must be at least 30 years of age and own real property to the net value of at least \$4,000 in the province for which he or she is appointed. In Quebec, senators are appointed for each of the original 24 electoral divisions in that province and they must reside, or have their property qualification, in the particular division for which they are appointed. Until 1965, senators were appointed for life; now the retirement age is 75. In May 1980 the average age in the Senate was 63.5.

The Senate performs three basic functions. In its legislative role, the Senate acts as a court of revision by reviewing Commons bills and frequently amending them. The amendments, often of a technical or clarifying nature, are usually concurred in by the Commons. Constitutionally, the Senate's legislative power is equal to that of the House of Commons. Any bill can be introduced in the Senate except a money bill. Although the Senate can reject any bill, it has rarely exercised this power.

Since 1971, it has been the practice to refer the subject-matter of major government bills to Senate committees before their formal introduction in the Senate. This has enabled the Senate to conduct thorough studies and, in some instances, to make recommendations for changes while a bill is still before the Commons.

In its deliberative role, the Senate provides a national forum for the discussion of public issues and the airing of regional concerns and grievances from all parts of Canada. On two days notice, a senator can start a debate, with no time limits, on any matter of regional or public concern.

Third is the Senate's investigative function. Inquiries into major social and economic issues by its standing and special committees have produced reports that have often been followed by remedial legislation or changes in government policy.

Representation in the Senate has grown from 72 at Confederation to its present total of 104 members, through the addition of members to represent new provinces and territories. The growth of membership in the Senate is summarized in Table 3.2.