

The law making process. 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. All bills must pass through various stages before they become law. These stages provide Parliament with opportunities to examine and consider all bills both in principle and in detail. 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 normally 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 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 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 on 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 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, the Chief Justice, or one of the other 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 32nd Parliament, covering the period from January 1966 to March 1980, are given in Table 19.1, along with the opening of the 33rd Parliament.

19.3.1 The Senate

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.

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