

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 or her 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 33rd Parliament, covering sessions since January 1966, are given in Table 19.1.

19.3.1 The Senate

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 reflects one of its primary purposes: to protect the interests of the less populous regions of Canada in matters under federal jurisdiction. Accordingly the 104 seats in the Senate are distributed on a regional basis as follows: 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 the Yukon and Northwest Territories, one each.

The Senate performs three basic functions. In its legislative role, its major work is in the revision of government bills, especially complex, technical bills, either passed by the House of Commons or introduced in the Senate itself. Committees composed of highly experienced senators study each bill and recommend amendments where necessary. The amendments, often of a technical or clarifying nature, are usually accepted by the House of 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 subject.

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

The Senate's legislative powers and duties are identical to those of the House of Commons with two exceptions: one is that appropriation or tax bills (ordinarily called money bills) must originate in the House of Commons; the other is that, since the passage of the Constitution Act, 1982, constitutional amendments may be adopted without the concurrence of the Senate after a period of 180 days.

The Senate's legislative power is often referred to as its veto power or absolute veto. These expressions are commonly understood to mean the constitutional right of the Senate to defeat or refuse to act upon a bill passed by the House of Commons. The House of Commons, on the other hand, has the same right to defeat or refuse to act upon a bill passed by the Senate. Since every bill, to become law, must be passed by both Houses, it follows that each House, in effect, has the same legislative or veto power. This legislative power includes the power to amend bills.

It is a long-standing practice in the Senate, when major government bills are introduced in the House of Commons, to refer the "subject-matter" of such bills to Senate committees in advance of their formal introduction in the Senate. This gives the Senate the time it needs to conduct thorough studies and to make known its recommendations for changes while a bill is still before the Commons.

Senators are appointed, in the Queen's name, by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. Until 1965, senators were appointed for life; now the retirement age is 75.

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 19.2.

As of January 3, 1987 representation in the Senate by political parties was as follows: Liberals, 66; Progressive Conservatives, 31; Independents, 5; Independent Liberal, 1; vacancies, 1.

A list of senators is published in Appendix C of this edition.