

## CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

rule the speakership of the House is, during one parliament, held by an English-speaking member and during the succeeding parliament by a French-speaking member. The Speaker is nominated by the government of the day, as is also the Deputy Speaker ; but they are not supposed, during their terms of office, to take an active share in party strife.

**Privileges of Members.**—The British North America Act (Sec. 50) provides that every House of Commons shall continue for five years unless sooner dissolved by the Governor-General. The privileges, immunities and powers of the House of Commons and its members, and those of the Senate and its members, are such as may be defined by act of parliament, but they must never exceed those held and enjoyed by the Commons of England and its members at the time any such act is passed in Canada. Among the sole rights of the Canadian Commons is that of initiating the grants of public money and of directing and limiting the appropriations without the Senate having any power to change them. The members of parliament also have certain rights and privileges, such as exemption from arrest during sessions of parliament and for a certain number of days before and after the meeting of parliament. This does not apply to cases of treason, felony, or charges generally of a criminal nature. Freedom of speech in parliament (subject to its own rules) is also guaranteed.

**Rule of Representation.**—Representation of the people in the House of Commons is readjusted from time to time by the parliament, subject to rules laid down in Sections 51 and 52 of the Act. One of these rules is that the province of Quebec shall have the fixed number of 65 members. Each of the other provinces is to have such a number of members as will bear the same proportion to the number of its population as the number 65 bears to the population of Quebec, as ascertained at the regular decennial census. (Sub-section 3 provides for fractional parts of the population required for membership or otherwise.)

**Dominion Finances.**—Among the most important provisions of the British North America Act are those relating to the appropriation of public money and the raising of taxes for federal purposes. All bills on these subjects must originate in the House of Commons, yet it is not lawful for even the House of Commons (Section 54) to adopt or pass any vote, bill, resolution or address for the payment of any part of the public funds for any purpose that has not first been recommended to the House by message from the Governor-General during the session in which such vote or bill is proposed. This rule is of the most vital and far-reaching importance, forming in many respects the key to responsible government as worked out in practice under the British constitutional system. The Governor-General may, in the Sovereign's name (Sec. 55), either assent at once to a bill passed by the Houses of Parliament or he may reserve it for the consideration of the King. The King may (Sec. 56) disallow an act passed by the Parliament of Canada, but such disallowance must be signified to each House of Parliament in Canada by speech, message or proclamation, and such disallowance must be made within two