

this constitutional solution was made possible largely by the emergence in Britain of the full-fledged cabinet system and the autonomy of Parliament from the Crown.

The proposal was implemented and a "second American revolution" was averted. Over the years complete independence for Canada developed as the original reservations were eliminated one by one, by peaceful means. In terms of the constitution, the procedure to amend it is still uncertain, and will be resolved as soon as Canadians themselves agree on the matter. The initiative and power no longer rest with Britain but with the Canadian people.

people vote for the members of the House of Commons on a national level. The party with the majority of seats, or with sufficient seats to form a coalition with other parties forms the government with its leader as prime minister. As executive head of government, the prime minister and his personally selected cabinet formulate policy and direct operations as long as they are supported by a majority in parliament. When they no longer have this support they are replaced by a coalition of the opposing parties, or an election is called. However, normally a government is given a mandate for five years with an option to call another election.

has a majority of members in the House of Commons and therefore is known as a majority government, or, if there is no majority, he is leader of the party which has enough members to constitute a majority with the support of other parties and is called a minority government. He is also the leader of the administration. This concentration of power was considered undesirable in the United States, and law making and implementation are separated by preventing an overlap of key personnel. It is forbidden for an individual to hold a post in Congress and an executive position at the same time, whereas in Canada all members of the cabinet must also be elected to the House of Commons, or at least appointed to the Senate.

members were elected to the House of Commons from constituencies across the country. In the next election this number will increase to 282 seats because of changes in the electoral map. The parliamentary system operates on the premise that there is an official governing party and an official opposition, that is the largest non-governing party. The major function of the House of Commons is to debate, ratify, or reject the proposals of the government which normally determines the agenda, thus expediting the acceptance of its proposals. The House of Commons also provides a check on the administration and holds the government accountable for its actions.

There are several committees of the House and Senate tied to specific subjects such as defence and external affairs, but they lack the independence of their American counterparts. These assignments are usually for the duration of a particular session of parliament and do not require specialization.

Long Live the Queen

As a constitutional monarch, the Queen is the permanent non-partisan head of state who symbolizes unity and common purpose. Her representative in Canada is the governor general, appointed by her on the advice of cabinet, normally for a term of five years. The prime minister is chief advisor to the Queen. He is head of government and chooses a cabinet from members of his own party. Constitutionally he could appoint someone from another party and must certainly do so if there is a coalition - something which is rare in Canadian politics. These cabinet ministers, who usually head a government department, are collectively responsible to the House of Commons for government policies and therefore speak and act as a unit.

The Shakers & Movers-The U.S.A.

In the United States, Congress is composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate, both of whom share fully in legislative activity. Originally it was intended that these Houses should determine policy and that the president and his administration should implement it. In practice it is possible for Congress to determine policy, but it is not common. Normally it confines itself to approving, rejecting, or amending policies recommended by the executive. The legislature can, and often does, reject executive proposals, something that in Canada would normally cause the government to fall and a new election to take place.

National parties have little power over congressmen once they are in office and thus they are much more independent than Canadian MPs who normally belong to disciplined parties. Congress conducts most of its work in committees which are more significant than in the Canadian system. They control the flow of legislation, develop expertise and clientele relationships with executive agencies and interest groups.

The United States senators are an influential group, sharing fully with the House of Representatives the power to legislate, and bills must receive Senate approval. Among the powers unique to the 435 members of the House, the most important are the powers to originate money bills and to set the agenda of the House. The Senate, on the other hand, has the unique responsibility of ratifying treaties with a two-thirds majority.

The Last Word

The Supreme Court, created in 1875, is the only court established by federal law in Canada, and it is the highest court in the land. There are nine members, a chief justice and eight other judges, all appointed by the executive. The Supreme Court has the final say in interpreting the laws and the Constitution. If it decides that a provincial or federal legislature had no right to pass certain laws, the laws cease to exist.

The United States Constitution established only one federal court, the Supreme Court, but authorized Congress to establish district courts and courts of appeal. The Supreme Court has a Chief Justice and eight associate justices appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate. As in Canada, the Supreme Court has the power to declare federal and state laws null and void when deemed in conflict with the Constitution.

Hail to the Chief

The president of the United States is the head of state and government and therefore the symbol of national unity but he is also a partisan party leader. He is the chief legislator, using his appointment powers and legislative initiative to influence the policy agenda in the legislature. Like the Canadian prime minister, the president has a cabinet whose members usually head a government department. Since he cannot nominate elected members, he can and does appoint officials who are experts in their fields. The American system creates an atmosphere of political bargaining not found in Canada. For example, the executive must rely on Congress for funds to implement policy, but the executive can also frustrate Congress because it is dependent on the executive to implement that policy. Also the Senate must ratify treaties and presidential appointments, such as to the cabinet or the federal courts, or ambassadors.

The Movers & Shakers-Canada

Parliament consists of two legislative bodies, the Senate and the House of Commons. The Senate was created mainly to assure a conservative upper house check on the House of Commons, and to provide all regions with equal representation regardless of size or population. The 104 senators are not elected but are appointed until the age of 75 by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister.

Today the Senate has a relatively minor role. It must ratify bills passed by the House for them to become law but rarely refuses to do so. Sometimes bills that do not involve spending money are considered before they are sent to the House, or special Senate committees may study public questions which might require the passing of laws.

In the 1974 federal election. 264

Through the Looking Glass

The Canadian and United States forms of government have much in common. Both are democratic and federal with three levels of government - federal, provincial or state, and municipal. They have distinct executive, legislative and judicial branches at the federal level. However the Canadian system being parliamentary and the United States system being presidential means the branches operate very differently in practice.

Canada is a constitutional monarchy with a constitution which has both written and unwritten elements. The written part, the British North America Act, was passed by the British Parliament in 1867 and outlines the basic structure of Canadian government and the division of authority between the provincial governments and the Federal Government. However the role of the prime minister and the cabinet system are not defined. At present, the most important provisions of the Act can be amended only by the British Parliament on a petition from Ottawa. The unwritten part embodies all the fundamental rights that evolved from the Magna Carta in Britain, and other historical documents which over the centuries have been incorporated into common law.

As in the British parliamentary system, the executive and legislative powers are combined. The Canadian

if it feels it has popular support - before that term is up.

The Constitution of the United States, signed in 1787, is a more complete document than that found in Canada. It describes the entire system of national government, and incorporates a complicated amendment system. It provides a republican form of government, that is, a sovereign state governed only by elected representatives. Legislators are elected at the local and state levels, in contrast to the Canadian system, and the voters also separately elect an executive, the president, who may or may not represent the same party that holds a majority in congress. The president is elected every four years. Senators are elected for six-year terms with one-third of the Senate up for election every two years. Members of the House of Representatives are elected for two-year terms.

The American Constitution is noted for its elaborate system of checks and balances. The executive, legislature and judiciary are each endowed with definite powers of their own, thereby reaffirming the belief that the powers of government should be separated as a safeguard against oppression. Other examples include the authority of the national government being offset by the states, the ability of one house of Congress to act as a brake on the other, and the ability of Congress to impeach the president and remove him from office.

In Canada the prime minister is the leader of the party which either