

The changes witnesses proposed to the method of appointing senators included the following:

- a fixed term for senators, from 6 to 10 years;
- nomination of half the candidates by provincial governments, or nomination of all of them by a group of reputable citizens in a manner analogous to the system for selecting federal judges; and
- appointment of senators following each federal or provincial election, in a proportion that reflects each party's share of the popular vote.

A number of other reforms would, it was argued, make an appointed Senate more effective and representative. They included the introduction of a suspensive veto which, it was believed, would be used more readily than the Senate's present absolute veto. Witnesses also said that there should be a greater proportion of seats for the western provinces and that more senators should be appointed from among minority groups and native peoples.

Those who advocate retaining the appointment of senators generally do so by arguing that it is a better option than direct election. They say that direct election would endanger the supremacy of the House of Commons and responsible government, whereas an appointed Senate would not compete with the Commons. They believe that an elected Senate would be more partisan and therefore less able to perform the three functions that this Committee has identified as being those that need strengthening — regional representation, legislative review and investigation. They also say that obtaining the necessary consent for constitutional change would involve further constitutional debate and might in any event prove impossible.

Those opposed to a reformed appointment process believe that any change short of direct election would not achieve the objectives of reform. A few go so far as to say it would be better to abolish the Senate than to tinker with the present arrangements. Their principal argument is that only direct election can give senators an adequate mandate to represent the people of the provinces and territories.

Most of the members of the Committee agree that direct election is the best course. However, because it could be some time before the necessary constitutional changes are made to allow direct election, we believe that some of the reforms proposed for an appointed Senate should be implemented immediately. We discuss these reforms in detail in Chapter 7.

A *Bundesrat*

In the late 1970s there were a number of proposals for a second chamber or council composed of delegates of provincial governments who would act on the instructions of those governments. These proposals were inspired by the example of the West German second chamber, the *Bundesrat*.