

CHAPTER 5

The Reform Alternatives

Introduction

In this chapter we review the arguments in favour of the various reform options in the light of the role we propose for the second chamber and the objectives of reform. These options are usually expressed in terms of how senators would be chosen. The four principal options are as follows:

- Reformed appointment — a second chamber whose members would continue to be appointed, but possibly in a different way, and that would undergo various reforms to improve its effectiveness.
- A *Bundesrat* — a council or second chamber whose members would be chosen by the provincial governments and who would vote according to their instructions.
- Indirect election — members of the second chamber would be elected by a two-tier process: that is, they would not be elected by the people of Canada but by MPs or provincial legislators from the different federal or provincial parties.
- Direct election — senators would be elected by the people of Canada.

Before we review the arguments for these reform options we should say something about another possible course of action — the abolition of the Senate without putting anything in its place.

The question of abolishing the Senate

Abolition as an option is not, strictly speaking, covered by the Committee's terms of reference. Very few people who made representations to the Committee advocated abolition. Nor was it the preferred option of the great majority of the various task forces and committees that have given extensive consideration to the role of the Senate in recent years. It is also clear from what we said in Chapter 4 that we believe the Senate should not only be retained but that it has an essential role to play in Canada's