

inet has to present its proposals to both Houses of Parliament. The House of Commons, consisting of 264 members, is the key part of Parliament. The Commons has to approve all legislation before it can be enacted.

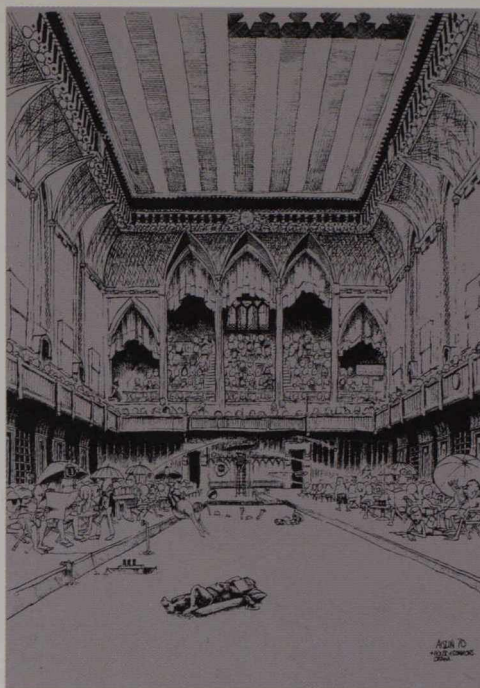
The Cabinet appoints the members of the Senate, the judges of the superior, district, and county courts, and the Lieutenant-Governors of the provinces. It commands the armed forces, appoints public servants, pardons criminals, declares war, makes peace, appoints ambassadors, makes and ratifies treaties, and makes regulations within the limits set by Acts of Parliament.

The Cabinet must speak as one on all questions of government policy. A minister who cannot support that policy must resign. Each minister of a department is answerable to the House of Commons for that department, and the whole Cabinet is answerable to the House for government policy and administration generally. If the Cabinet is defeated in the House on a motion of want of confidence, it must either resign office, when the Governor-General will call on the Leader of the Opposition to form a new Cabinet or advise a fresh election — generally the latter nowadays.

Defeat of a major government bill will ordinarily be considered a vote of want of confidence and lead to the same consequences. But the Cabinet can choose to consider any such defeat not decisive. It is then open to the House to vote straight want of confidence.

Only the Cabinet can introduce bills for the raising or spending of public money. Ordinary members of the House of Commons can move to reduce proposed taxes or expenditures, but not to raise them. The rules of the House allot most of its time to Cabinet business, and nearly all legislation now comes from the Cabinet. The Cabinet also has the sole power to move closure, cutting off debate; and, if the parties fail to agree, the Cabinet can move to fix a time-table for the various stages of a bill. But the rules are careful also to provide abundant opportunity for the Opposition to question, criticize and attack. Twenty-five days of each parliamentary session are specifically allotted to the Opposition to debate any subject it pleases, and on six of those days it can move want of confidence.

The second house of Parliament is the Senate, which is similar in name only to its American counterpart. Canadian senators are not elected.



While some useful legislation is introduced in the Senate and while it increasingly conducts useful public inquiries (Senate Committee on the Mass Media, see VOL. II, ISSUE THREE), its power is limited and there is controversy as to its value. It has frequently been suggested that the Senate be abolished altogether.

Both the House of Commons and the Senate operate on the party system. Generally, votes in Parliament follow party lines and the discipline within the parties is much tighter than it is in Washington. The parliamentary system requires this tight discipline. Very rarely does a member of the Commons

break party ranks, particularly if he is a member of the party headed by the Prime Minister.

The third branch of the Canadian system of government is the judiciary. In Canada all judges are appointed. The highest court in the land is the Supreme Court, which consists of nine justices sitting in Ottawa. In the provinces all judges except those serving in the minor courts are appointed and paid by the federal government.

The Canadian system of government is, as noted, a federal system. Power to make laws is divided between the national or federal government in Ottawa and the governments of the ten provinces. Like the American colonies after the Revolution, the British North American colonies in 1867 recognized the need for unity and common action. Yet none of them was willing to give up its own existence completely. On the other hand, the Fathers of Confederation from all the colonies knew how important it was to give the new national government great power to enable it to carry out the immense task of creating a new country which could ensure prosperity for its people and withstand the pull from the United States.

Indeed, the example of the United States served to reinforce the importance of a strong government at the centre. The British North Americans had watched across the border as the United States had been torn apart and had fallen into civil war. The American states had too much power, the Canadians concluded, and the central government in Washington too little. They were determined that there would be no similar mistake in the new Canada.

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