

port of the majority of elected members of the House before becoming law.

The head of the party receiving the second-largest number of seats in a federal election officially becomes Leader of the Opposition in the House. It is the responsibility of the Opposition party, and all other Members of the House of Commons, to examine all actions of the Government and criticize those with which they disagree.

Approval or disapproval of proposals, generally in the form of bills introduced by the Government, and sometimes by private Members, is determined in the House by vote. When the Cabinet (i.e. the Government) loses the confidence of the House, it must either resign or request a dissolution from the Governor General and go to the people in a general election.

The Senate, or Upper House, consists of 102 members appointed on a regional basis by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The Senate may initiate minor legislation that does not involve expenditure of public funds. The Senate is required to examine, pass or reject all legislation sent up from the House of Commons. Senators retire at the age of 75.

All Government bills are read three times in both the House of Commons and the Senate before becoming legislation or law. If a bill passes the House of Commons, it may be altered or rejected by the Senate. However, important measures cannot be held up indefinitely by the Upper House. All bills are given royal assent by the Governor General.

The Canadian Constitution, establishing the Government of Canada and the framework within which the federal and provincial governments share their respective responsibilities, is not incorporated in a single written document. It is rather a combination of enactments, beginning with the British North America Act of 1867, of statutes and Orders in Council and, more significantly, the adherence to parliamentary customs and practices inherited from the British system, upon which Canada's parliamentary government was modelled.

The major responsibilities of the Federal Government at Ottawa are the control of the nation's defences and foreign policy, trade and commerce, currency and banking and criminal law.

## **PROVINCIAL**

There are ten provincial governments in Canada, each headed by a lieutenant-governor and consisting of an elected legislative assembly. All provincial governments have a unicameral legislature.

Provincial governments are responsible for important matters such as education, working conditions, property laws and health. Within each province, elected municipal governments deal with local affairs. Each province has its own series of courts, ranging from magistrates' courts to the provincial superior court.

Lieutenant-governors represent the Crown, and are generally appointed for five-year terms by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

## **TERRITORIAL**

Both the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are represented in the House of Commons, and both have a considerable degree of local self-government.

The Yukon government comprises a Commissioner, appointed by the Federal Government, and a locally-elected Legislative Council of seven members. The government of the Northwest Territories is also headed by an appointed Commissioner and a 12-man Council, seven of whom are elected and the remainder appointed by the Federal Government.

More autonomy is being granted to the Territories and many functions, formerly the exclusive responsibility of the Federal Government, are gradually being assumed by the governments of the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories.