

In the Appendix are two tabular statements (A. & B.) showing the following facts for each year during five years :

1. Sittings and adjournments of the Senate, each session.
2. Government, Public and Private Bills introduced respectively in the Senate and the House of Commons, each session.

The facts set forth in the second table may be considered, in a measure, responsible for the facts disclosed in the first table. But by reference to the second table it will be seen that there has been a decided increase in the number of public bills initiated in the Senate of late years. In 1890, there were 17 government and public bills brought down to the Commons from the Senate against 9 in 1886, 5 in 1887, and 3 in 1888. Of this number, 13 were government bills.

In the case of Private Bills, there has been no change in the same desirable direction. In 1890, there were 81 Private Bills introduced in the Commons and only six presented in the Senate, and of the latter three were Divorce Bills, which have been always initiated in the upper house. The same facts are disclosed by reference to the Journals of the Senate for each session since 1867.

It is quite obvious that if the promoters of Private Bills are free to select the House they choose for the initiation of their legislation, they will, as was the case originally in England, always go to the House of Commons, under the belief that if they pass the ordeal of that body, the consideration in the upper house will be easy enough and a matter of secondary importance. The question then occurs whether it is possible or expedient to follow the English practice and divide legislation between the chambers without reference to the wishes of promoters.

In England, we have seen the rules provide for:—

1. The presentation of petitions and bills at a fixed date, before each session of Parliament.
2. The examination of bills and petitions by permanent Chairmen of each House, and by Examiners—all these being officials of the Houses.

The Canadian House of Commons have already the following rule providing for the printing and the presentation of Bills before the commencement of each session.

“ Any person seeking to obtain any private bill, giving any exclusive privilege or profit, or private or corporate advantage, or for any amendment of any former act, shall be required to deposit with the Clerk of the House, *eight* days before the meeting of the House, a copy of such bill in the English and French languages, with a sum sufficient to pay for translating and printing the same, etc.”

This rule has never been practically enforced. A table in the Appendix (C) shows the number of bills sent in to the Clerk of the Commons before and after the session under this rule during the past five years. It is noteworthy, however, that there appears to have been an improvement in this direction for the past two years. As a matter of fact, the number sent in under the rule were on the very eve of the session. The majority still continue to be presented during the session.

It seems that the Canadian rule should have gone further, and in accordance with the English Standing Order, should have required that both petition and bill be forwarded at the same time. As the rule is now, petitions are presented “after the first ten days,” and private bills “after the first two weeks of each session”—a term invariably continued for several weeks, in the case of both petitions and bills, during the session, on the recommendation of the Committee on Standing Orders.