

Editorial

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After a six year hiatus parliamentary reform returned to the agenda of the House of Commons when the Special Committee on the Standing Orders and Procedure presented its report on November 5, 1982. The Committee was established in the aftermath of the "bells crisis" last March when angry opposition members boycotted the House while the division bells rang for fifteen days. Details of changes proposed will be outlined in the next issue of the *Review*, however, the adoption of this report by the House on November 29 marks the first step toward the rehabilitation of an institution which has gone through one of its darkest hours since parliamentary democracy was adopted in this country. The Committee intends to continue its investigation into the malaise from which Parliament suffers and will be making further recommendations in the future. In Quebec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia the subject of procedural reform is also under active consideration.

In this issue we are publishing several articles which outline a few of the issues facing parliamentary reformers be they in Ottawa or the provinces. Vaughan Lyon, a professor of political studies, argues in favour of a less adversarial and more consensual approach to Parliament. The rules should recognize that complex issues cannot always be resolved in a simple struggle between government and opposition. In a widely acclaimed paper originally presented to the Special Committee, two Members of Parliament, Ron Huntington and Claude-André Lachance called for increased accountability and greater parliamentary scrutiny of the expenditure process. This paper is sure to stimulate as much interest among our readers as it has in the Special Committee.

Perhaps the most promising area for parliamentary reform is the committee system. The Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport, Maurice Dionne, offers a veritable treasure chest of ideas as to how the committee system can be improved. The article by Barbara Reynolds on Women and the Indian Act demonstrates the opportunities to revitalize Parliament through the innovative use of committees and sub-committees.

An area of special interest to presiding officers and table officials is succinctly outlined in the article by the Clerk of the Ontario Legislative Assembly. Finally, John Leefe, Deputy Speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly touches a matter bound to interest all parliamentarians: the need for adequate facilities and accommodations if legislators are to carry out the varied tasks expected of them.



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