



Appendix A: 1976 recommendations

Joint Committee on the Parliamentary Committee System, *A New Parliamentary Committee System*, May 1976

List of recommendations

- 1 It is recommended that standing orders be amended to provide for the appointment of legislation committees to consider Bills, clause by clause, after they have passed the second reading.
- 2 It is recommended that standing orders be amended to provide that at the commencement of each Parliament a Committee of Selection be appointed in each House.
- 3 It is recommended that standing orders be amended to provide that a motion to refer a Bill to a legislation committee be on notice and that the Chair should refuse to proceed with the motion if, on the calling of the notice, it is objected to by one-sixth or more of the total membership of the House rising in their places to signify that they do not wish the motion to proceed to a vote.
- 4 It is recommended that standing orders provide that legislation committee chairmen be chosen from the Deputy or Temporary Chairmen of Committees.
- 5 It is recommended that House of Representatives standing orders provide that legislation committees be of not less than 13 members and not more than 19 members, excluding the chairman and that a quorum be one-third.

- 6 It is recommended that Senate standing orders provide that legislation committees be of no less than 6, excluding the chairman and that a quorum be one-third.
- 7 It is recommended that the standing orders provide that a legislation committee's proceedings may be suspended at any time by the chairman if the members present do not constitute a quorum.
- 8 It is recommended that standing orders provide that the chairmen of legislation committees be entitled to permit any members of their House to speak in debate.
- 9 It is recommended that Bills be reprinted, if amended, before they are reported to the House and that the report of a legislation committee not contain argument.
- 10 It is recommended that governments adopt the practice of presenting to the House of Representatives Green Papers and White Papers relating to proposed legislation.
- 11 The Committee recommends that the House of Representatives appoint a Standing Committee on Public Administration.
- 12 It is recommended that the Senate establish 8 standing subject matter committees of 6 Senators.
- 13 It is recommended that the Senate standing committees be established by standing order and that the standing orders prescribe the following procedure for selection of references:
 - (a) all references shall be by resolution of the Senate;
 - (b) the first task of a committee is to report back to the Senate recommending a definition of its terms of reference and a deadline for completion of its inquiry;
 - (c) the inquiry shall not commence until the Senate has ratified the definition of the terms of reference and accepted the projected time scale.
- 14 It is recommended that the House of Representatives establish, by standing order, a standing business committee.
- 15 It is recommended that the subject matter committees of the House of Representatives be of no more than 8 members, that no more than 8 such committees operate concurrently and that each committee be required to report by a certain date.

- 16 It is recommended that subject matter committees of the Senate and the House have a quorum of 3, or 2 for the purpose of taking evidence.
- 17 It is recommended that the responsibilities of the House, Library and Publications Committees devolve directly on the Presiding Officers and the Management and Members' Services Committee.
- 18 It is recommended that standing orders provide for the appointment, at the commencement of each Parliament, of an advisory committee of backbenchers to be known as the Management and Members' Services Committee to confer with and advise the Presiding Officers.
- 19 It is recommended that the standing orders of the Senate and the House of Representatives be amended to provide for the appointment of a Committee on Procedure in each House; that the committees be of no more than 7 members; that no office holders other than the Presiding Officer and his deputy be eligible for appointment; and that the terms of reference of the committees be as follows:

"To maintain a continuing surveillance of the practices and procedures of the Senate (House) with a view to making recommendations for their improvement or change and for the development of new procedures; such recommendations being made normally by report to the Senate (House) but, on certain occasions, being made directly to the Presiding Officer when the recommendations relate to the exercise of existing powers."
- 20 It is recommended that the practices of the Houses for the appointment of select committees be maintained; that select committees consist of no more than 6 Senators or 8 Members; that a quorum of a select committee be 3, or 2 for the purpose of taking evidence.
- 21 It is recommended that select committees not be empowered to report from time to time.
- 22 It is recommended that the Senate appoint a standing committee to deal with delegated powers and that the standing orders of the Senate be amended to accurately describe the scope of its activity.
- 23 It is recommended that the Procedure Committees established pursuant to recommendation 19 (paragraph 249) be immediately charged with the task of preparing the legislation and standing orders required to give effect to the recommendations of this report.

- 24 The Committee recommends to the Presiding Officers that they consider the classifications of permanent committee secretariat staff with a view to ensuring that they are not disadvantaged by comparison with the salary classifications of Public Servants performing similar functions.
- 25 Accordingly, it is recommended that (contingent upon the Public Accounts and Public Works Committees not being abolished) Mr President and Mr Speaker consult with a view to allocating the secretariats of the Public Accounts and Public Works Committees within the permanent committee secretariat of the House of Representatives.