

# Federal Government

Socials 10

# Legislative Branch

**Legislative Branch – A branch of government with the power to make and change **LAWS**.**

**The legislative branch of the federal government has three parts: 1) **GOVERNOR GENERAL**, 2) **HOUSE OF COMMONS**, and 3) **SENATE**.**

**These parts of the government are called **PARLIAMENT**.**

# Legislative Branch – Governor General

The Governor General has a **CEREMONIAL** role in the legislative branch.

Once Parliament passes a bill, the governor General must give **ROYAL ASSENT** before the bill can officially become a law of Canada.

# Legislative Branch – House of Commons

The House of Common has **338** elected seats.

These seats are taken by elected **MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT** (MPs) from many different parties.

(Example: Tracy Gray for Kelowna – Lake Country.)

Elections are based on the principle of **REPRESENTATION BY POPULATION.**

The **GOVERNMENT** is formed by the party with the most seats.

# Legislative Branch – House of Commons

The “Government” party sits to the **RIGHT** of the Speaker, with the **PRIME MINISTER** and **CABINET** sitting in the front row.

The remaining members sit behind, and are therefore called **BACKBENCHERS**.

The “Government” plays the dominate role in making and changing laws.

# Legislative Branch – House of Commons

The **OPPOSITION** parties sit to the left of the Speaker.

The **OFFICIAL OPPOSITION** is formed by the party with the second most seats in the House of Commons.

All opposition parties play the role of keeping the “Government” in check and accountable to the people.

# Legislative Branch – House of Commons

**Representation by Population** – The number of seats given to any province is based on the population of that the province, and therefore provinces with large populations have **MORE** seats in the House of Commons than provinces with smaller populations.

**Riding** - An electoral district that can elect one **MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT** (MP) to be its representative in the House of Commons.

**Speaker** – An elected member of Parliament, who is elected by fellow MPs to act as the referee of the debate in the House of Commons.

# Legislative Branch – House of Commons

**Prime Minister** – The leader of the party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons, which is also called the **GOVERNMENT PARTY**.

**Cabinet Ministers** – Elected MPs who are appointed by the **GOVERNOR GENERAL** on the recommendation of the **PRIME MINISTER** to lead government departments.

(Example: Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Generally, Cabinet Ministers introduce the most legislation to the House of Commons.

**Cabinet** – The collective group of Cabinet Ministers.



# Legislative Branch – House of Commons

**Opposition Leader** – The leader of the party that wins the **SECOND** most seats in the House of Commons.

**Shadow Cabinet** - Elected MPs who are appointed by the **OPPOSITION LEADER** to criticize specific government departments.

**Caucus** – A policy meeting of elected MPs from the **SAME** party that takes place behind closed doors.

**Party Discipline** – A strategy of all members of a party showing public **SUPPORT** for a party decision, and supporting party legislation.

**Free Vote** – A method of allowing elected MPs to break ranks with their party, and vote according to their constituents or conscious.

# Legislative Branch – Senate

The Senate has **105** appointed seats.

Senators are appointed by the **GOVERNOR GENERAL** based on the advice of the **PRIME MINISTER**.

Senators must retire by age **75**.

The Senate is supposed to provide a “**SOBER SECOND THOUGHT**” to bills from the House of Commons.

The Senate is supposed to provide **REGIONAL REPRESENTATION**, plus offer protection for **MINORITIES**.

# Legislative Branch – Senate

## Senate Seats . . .

**Ontario Division: 24 seats**

**Quebec Division: 24 seats**

**Western Division: 24 seats**

**( 6 seats per province!)**

**Maritime Division: 24 seats**

**( 10 New Brunswick)**

**( 10 Nova Scotia)**

**( 4 Prince Edward Island)**

# Legislative Branch – Senate

## Additional Representation . . .

**Newfoundland & Labrador**      **6 seats**

**Northwest Territories**      **1 seat**

**Yukon Territory**      **1 seat**

**Nunavut**      **1 seat**

# Legislative Branch – Senate

The Senate can **CHANGE** or **REJECT** bills introduced in the House of Commons.

The Senate can also introduce bills, but cannot propose any bills requiring the spending of **TAXPAYER MONEY**.

Some Canadians want to see the Senate **REFORMED**.

# EXECUTIVE BRANCH

**Executive Branch – This is the branch of government with power to **MANAGE** government **DEPARTMENTS** and **POLICIES**.**

**The executive branch of the federal government **“STEERS”** the country.**

**The executive is made up of the **GOVERNOR GENERAL, PRIME MINISTER, CABINET,** and the **PUBLIC SERVICE**.**

# EXECUTIVE BRANCH – GOVERNOR GENERAL

The Governor General has a **CEREMONIAL** role in the executive branch.

The Governor General is appointed by the **MONARCHY** on the advice of the **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA / PRIME MINISTER.**

The Governor General is **HEAD OF STATE.**

The Governor General asks a new **PARTY LEADER** to form a government if the Prime Minister resigns.

# EXECUTIVE BRANCH – GOVERNOR GENERAL

The Governor General calls **ELECTIONS**, and appoints **LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS** for the provinces.

The Governor General gives the **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**, which is written by the Prime Minister.

On the advice of the Prime Minister, the Governor General can **SUSPEND** a session of parliament without dissolving Parliament.

(MPs take a break, and there is no new election!)



# EXECUTIVE BRANCH – PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister is **HEAD OF GOVERNMENT**.

The Prime Minister appoints **CABINET MINISTERS** and **SENATORS**.

The Prime Minister sets **ELECTION DATES**, changes the **SIZE** and **SHAPE** of cabinet, and gives **DIRECTION** to government departments.

The Prime Minister advises the **GOVERNOR GENERAL** when to dissolve Parliament.

# EXECUTIVE BRANCH – CABINET

**Cabinet Ministers are normally MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, but can also be SENATORS.**

**Cabinet Ministers are normally from the GOVERNMENT PARTY, but not always.**

**Once appointed to the Cabinet, they are called “MINISTER.”**

**Cabinet Ministers are in charge of the PUBLIC SERVICE.**

# EXECUTIVE BRANCH – PUBLIC SERVICE

Top civil servants in each department are called “**DEPUTY MINISTER.**”

The public service includes **DEPARTMENTS** like the Department of Defence, **CROWN CORPORATIONS** like the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), **REGULATORY AGENCIES** like the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and **ADVISORY BOARDS** like the National Advisory Board on Forest Research.

# JUDICIAL BRANCH

**Judicial Branch – This is the branch of government with the power to **INTERPRET** laws.**

**Judges are independent from the **LEGISLATIVE** and **EXECUTIVE** branches of government.**

**This allows the judicial branch to interpret the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms without government interference!**

**The judicial branch is a **CHECK** on government power, and it is design to protect **CITIZENS** from government tyranny.**

# JUDICIAL BRANCH – SUPREME & PROVINCIAL COURTS

## Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Canada is the **FINAL** court of appeal in Canada.

Supreme Court judges are appointed by the **GOVERNOR GENERAL** on the recommendation of the **PRIME MINISTER**.

## Provincial Courts

These courts handle legal interpretation at the provincial level, but decisions can be appealed to the **SUPREME COURT OF CANADA**.