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The Canadian Political System

By Dave Lympny

The Canadian political system as it is known today was first drafted by the "Fathers of

Confederation" at the Quebec conference of 1864. This then became law when the constitution act was passed in 1867. This act gave the formal executive authority to Queen Victoria (Queen of Great Britain) which made Canada a sovereign democracy. The Canadian political system is therefore loosely based on the British system.

Now, Canada is an independent Federal state with the Queen still the head of state. Her powers are extremely limited however, as the Parliament passes the laws which the Queen gives the "Royal Assent" as the final step. The Governor General of Canada is the Queens representative in Canada and carries out all the Royal obligations when the Queen is not in Canada. The Governor is always a Canadian chosen by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister. The length of office is normally five years for the Governor General. The Houses of Parliament (housing the Federal Government) are located in Canada's capital city, Ottawa. There are 3 main sections to the Canadian Parliament. The Queen as the Head of state; the Senate (appointed on the Prime Minister's recommendations) and the elected House of Commons. The Federal Government has the power to "make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada" which includes International policies, Defence, Immigration, Criminal Law, Customs and Border control.

The Senate

The Senate is made up of 105 Senators who are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. These Senators are men and women from all of the Provinces and from a wide variety of backgrounds. They can serve on the Senate up until age 75 and have to be a Canadian citizen, over age 30, own \$4,000 of equity in land in their home Province, have over \$4,000 as personal net worth and live in the province represented. Each Province or Territory has a set number of Senators – 24 each from the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario, 6 each from Alberta, BC, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 6 from Newfoundland and Labrador and a further 1 each from the three Territories. The main role of the Senate is to read over and examine the "Bills" sent from the House of Commons though they can also initiate Bills. This process ensures that no rogue bills will become law, though only rarely do the Senate reject a Bill – sending it back to the House for amendment. The

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Bills are subjected to the full legislative process by the Senate and if passed will be given to the Governor General for Royal Assent and thus become Law.

House of Commons

The real power is held by the House of Commons. Here, the members of Parliament (MP's) are elected by the general public during a Federal election – normally every 5 years. The country is split up into constituencies (total 308 by population size) and whichever candidate has the most votes wins the right to represent that constituency and take their "seat" in the Parliament.

Each Most candidates represent a particular political party and the party with the most "seats" takes over as the Government. The main parties in Canada are Paul Martins Liberals (ruling), Stephen Harpers Conservatives, Jack Layton's New Democratic Party, The Bloc Quebecois and The Green Party to name the largest.

The leader of the political party that wins the election becomes the Prime Minister of Canada (currently Paul Martin of the Liberals). The Prime Minister effectively runs the country with the support and advice of his Cabinet. The Cabinet is made up of "Ministers" chosen by the Prime Minister to be responsible for certain areas of the Government. There are ministers of Health, Finance, Defence and Immigration to name a few. These areas of responsibility are called "Portfolio's" and each minister will have a large team of civil servants (normally the experts in that field) working for him/her. Only the ministers change during an election – not the civil servants. Though the MP's represent their local constituency, their main duties are debating the laws to be made and, depending on their Party, either supporting or opposing the Government. The opposition is the political party with the second most seats in the House and their main job is to hold the government accountable for their decisions. A Government with a lot of seats in the House will be strong and able to pass most laws they want through Parliament. Conversely, a weak Government (such as now) doesn't have the majority of the seats and has to rely on the support of another party to form an effective Government. After each election, the Senate and the House of Commons either elect (House) or appoint (Senate) a Speaker. The Speaker is in charge of proceedings and has to be impartial, enforcing the rules of the House/Senate during debates and votes. The Speaker presides over the House from a raised chair with the Government MP's on the right and the opposition on the Left.

Making the Laws

To start with, the House of Commons members introduce a "Bill" (legislative proposal). The details of the Bill are read in the House without debate and then the Bill is printed (the first reading). During the second reading the principles of the Bill are debated followed by a vote. If successful, the Bill is then sent to the Committee stage.

A committee will listen to testimony, examine the Bill and then submits a report to the House recommending it as it is, with amendments or scrapped. From here it goes to the report stage.

In the report phase, any amendments are debated and voted on. Then it will pass to the third reading. This is where the House finally debates and votes on the final draft – if it passes the vote it is sent to

the Senate.

The Senate put the Bill through the same process as the House – if it comes through all that (normally does!) it is given Royal Assent and becomes Canadian Law!

For more detailed information go to

http://www.onestopimmigration–canada.com/canadian_political_system.html

The author immigrated to Canada in 2003 and has constructed a free information website

<http://www.onestopimmigration–canada.com>

about Canadian Immigration and life in Canada based on

his family's experiences.

TV Signal Theft - Robbing Canadians

By News Canada

(NC)—According to some recent ads, there's no such thing as 'free' cable or satellite TV.

The bottom line message: television signal theft is just that, theft.

It's all part of a recent campaign program by Canada's broadcasting industry to try and educate the Canadian public to the serious problem of signal theft.

The reason is simple: Hundreds of thousands of Canadian households are estimated to be illegally accessing television services, resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars being siphoned out of the Canadian broadcasting system each year.

That translates into lost income and revenue for Canadian actors, writers, directors, producers, technicians, distributors, broadcasters, advertisers and many others employed in the production and airing of Canadian television programming.

It means, simply, less money in the system, fewer productions production, less investment and fewer jobs. Those millions could be going to Canadian companies, paying for Canadian jobs, producing quality Canadian programming and helping drive Canada's economy.

The most direct result of signal theft is seen in its impact on the Canadian Television Fund. Every time revenue drops for Canada's broadcasting industry so does the 5 per cent of revenues the industry contributes to support production of Canadian programming through the Canadian Television Fund. It amounts to \$4 to \$7.5 million lost annually. That's \$4 million to \$7.5 million fewer dollars available to support the production of Canadian drama, children's programming, documentaries and variety and

performing arts programming.

The loss of funding is critical. It comes at a time when the Canadian Television Fund should be striving to increase the number of hours of programming it helps create and focusing on initiatives that attract and build Canadian audiences - not scaling back.

Yet the law is clear on satellite signal theft. In the spring of 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled that unauthorized reception of satellite signals is illegal. Since the ruling, the broadcasting industry, led by companies like Bell ExpressVu, has worked closely with the Government to stop signal theft. Illegal equipment has been seized, charges have been laid, and dealers supplying illegal equipment have been shut down.

But it will take more than just law enforcement to solve this problem.

It will take a change in perception on the part of the Canadian public and an understanding that just like shoplifting, signal theft is not a victimless crime.

More information on the issue can found by visiting:

www.bell.ca/exvuusignaltheft

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TV Signal Theft - Robbing Canadians

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Business Legacy Less Important Than Comfortable Retirement, Say Business Owners

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PodCast Teleprompter

Free List Pro

DOS Made Easy

Domain Alarm – Is your site working?



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