

Constitutional
and Parliamentary
Information
ASGP



The Parliamentary Budget

Powers of the Speaker/President in the Chamber

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Aims

The Inter-Parliamentary Union whose international Statute is outlined in a Headquarters Agreement drawn up with the Swiss federal authorities, is the only world-wide organization of Parliaments.

The aim of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is to promote personal contacts between members of all Parliaments and to unite them in common action to secure and maintain the full participation of their respective States in the firm establishment and development of representative institutions and in the advancement of the work of international peace and co-operation, particularly by supporting the objectives of the United Nations.

In pursuance of this objective, the Union makes known its views on all international problems suitable for settlement by parliamentary action and puts forward suggestions for the development of parliamentary assemblies so as to improve the working of those institutions and increase their prestige.

Membership of the Union (December 1991)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, USSR, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Associated members: Andean Parliament, European Parliament.

Structure

The organs of the Union are:

1. *The Inter-Parliamentary Conference* which meets twice a year.
2. *The Inter-Parliamentary Council*, composed of two members from each affiliated Group. *President*: Sir Michael Marshall (United Kingdom).
3. *The Executive Committee*, composed of twelve members elected by the Conference, as well as of the Council President acting as *ex officio* President. At present, it has the following composition:

President: Sir Michael Marshall (United Kingdom)

Members: M. Arguello Morales (Nicaragua); M. Darusman (Indonesia); M. J. Essaid (Morocco); L. Fischer (Germany); L. Fonka Shang (Cameroon); J. Komiyama (Japan); M. A. Martinez (Spain); L. McLeay (Australia); H. Megahed (Egypt); E. Mulet Lesieur (Guatemala); Y. Tavernier (France); V. Valkov (Bulgaria).

4. *Secretariat of the Union*, which is the international secretariat of the Organization, the headquarters being located at: Place du Petit-Saconnex, CP 99, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

Secretary general: Mr. Pierre Cornillon.

Official publication

The Union's official organ is the *Inter-Parliamentary Bulletin*, which appears quarterly in both English and French. This publication is indispensable in keeping posted on the activities of the Organization. Subscription can be placed with the Union's Secretariat in Geneva.

Constitutional and Parliamentary Information

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Contents

I. The Parliamentary Budget

- A. Topical discussion: extract from the Minutes of the London session. 1
- B. Report on the Parliamentary Budget. 6

II. The Uruguayan Parliamentary System

- Extract from the Minutes of the Uruguay session. 21

II. Powers of the Speaker / President in the Chamber

- A. Introductory note. 28
- B. Topical discussion: extract from the Minutes of the Cyprus session. 33

IV. Composition and role of the Bureau

- A. Introductory note. 44
- B. Topical discussion: extract from Minutes of the Budapest session. 48
- C. Results of the mini-questionnaire on the composition and role of the Bureau. 53
- Annex: Tables I-IV. 60

V. Changing Parliaments in Changing Political Systems

A. Introductory note by Mr. Sawicki 78

B. Introductory note by Mr. Quiroz 82

C. Topical discussion: extract from the Minutes of the
Uruguay session. 83

I. The Parliamentary Budget

A. Topical discussion introduced by Mr Jacobson, Secretary General of the Knesset (Israel))

Extract from the minutes of the London session, September 1989

Mr. JACOBSON (Israel) spoke as follows:

I have raised this subject because of the position taken by the head of the budget department in the Treasury Ministry. He challenged the amount of Knesset budget which had been decided by the Speaker of the Knesset.

The procedure is that the Speaker transmits his draft budget to the House (management) Committee. Following discussion and approval this budget is sent to the Treasury Ministry for inclusion in the general budget of the state.

The government decided to limit the size of the national budget. The limit fixed thus brought financial pressure on the various departments to reduce the number of employees in all parts of the public service. This brought up the issue whether the Speaker would ignore them, in order to provide whatever manpower was needed by the parliament. Could a senior civil servant write to the Speaker requiring him to comply with the financial limits set by the government?

No procedural rules or law seems to cover this point. After all, ministers and government departments are meant to obey parliament and not the other way round. Should the Speaker, in preparing the draft budget, take into account financial limits decided by the government?

This was what happened in the Knesset: after the new budget was tabled, the Knesset budget was referred to a joint committee of 5 members each from the House (management) Committee and the Finance Committee. The Chairman came from the House Committee.

As a result the Knesset budget met parliament's needs and the additional expenditure required (above the amount covered by the government's financial limits) was drawn from the general reserve in the national budget.

Constitutional and Parliamentary Information

2

Mr. HJORTDAL (Denmark) said it was an essential question for any parliament whether the government controlled the parliamentary budget. The Folketing budget was decided on by the Presidium and discussed in the Rules Committee. It could not thereafter be changed. It had to be incorporated into the government's finance bill. The budget was confined to parliamentary activity.

Mr. MARLEAU (Canada) said that the House of Commons budget was set by the Board of Internal Economy which formerly comprised entirely Ministers and the Speaker. It was therefore unlikely to breach government expenditure plans. The role of the government had been diminished slightly recently but it still had strong influence. There was a general disposition to follow the staffing and spending spirit of government plans. If the government wanted to reduce the manpower of the House of Commons it would have to persuade both the Board of Internal Economy and the House itself.

Mr. CHARPIN (France) said that there would be a major row in France if the government tried to alter the Senate's budget. Nonetheless it was difficult for a Chamber of Parliament to go systematically against government spending plans. One important aspect was what exactly the parliamentary budget covered and whether, for instance, pensions, equipment and building costs were included, as well as salaries.

In France three Questors set the budget for each Chamber and then the six combined together to determine the parliamentary budget. This would be sent to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the government's expenditure plans. By custom there was no debate on the parliamentary budget.

Mr. BOULTON (UK) said that he was in favour of a questionnaire being circulated on this subject. There should be a question on what areas the parliamentary budget covered. In the UK the government did not control the budget of the House of Commons and general government spending restrictions did not apply. Members' salaries were set by a free vote in the House of Commons and the last such vote had gone against the government, so MPs were being paid more than the government planned. Printing costs of parliament were included in government expenditure but were not controlled by government restrictions in that they were demand-led. Building costs, on the other hand, were governed by government policy and included in the government budget. This affected new buildings and maintenance costs. All other aspects of parliamentary expenditure, namely, staff, travel, security, telephones etc. were approved by the House of Commons Commission on which only one Minister sat. The estimate for the House of Commons was made by the Speaker himself and not channelled through a government department.

The government could, of course, use its majority in the House to reject the estimate. Staff costs were linked to government policy in that, by statute, the pay and conditions of the House of Commons staff had to be in line with those of the Civil Service. The House did, voluntarily, take part in the government's forward planning for expenditure.

Mr. ALBA NAVARRO (Spain) said that a questionnaire should include the issue of who actually controlled the spending as well as the allocating of funds.

Mr. ANDERSON (USA) said that in the House of Representatives the budget covered everything except for buildings. The salaries of 11,000 employees were included. The Clerk drew up the budget and presented it to the Legislative Grand Sub-Committee of the Appropriations Committee. Each Chamber drew up its own budget and by tradition this was not questioned by the other House. The Clerk was responsible to the Appropriations and the House Administrations Committees for the spending of the money allocated. This aspect of his work occupied a large part of his time.

Mr. HADJIOANNOU (Cyprus) said that in Cyprus the parliamentary budget was approved by the Speaker and sent to the Minister of Finance. There were discussions with government officials who often sought to reduce the budget. All the parties represented in parliament favoured greater autonomy for the parliament but Article 80 of the rules provided that no Bill for increasing spending could be introduced by a Private Member.

Dato WAN ZAHIR (Malaysia) said that the Treasury (Finance Ministry) played a central role in all financial matters. The parliamentary budget had recently been drawn to the attention of the Cabinet and although there had been a substantial increase in the past two decades, largely for buildings and increased MP's salaries, parliament was not autonomous in the preparation of the budget. These things had to be negotiated each year with the Treasury.

Mr. YONG TAK YOO (Korea) said that in Korea the draft budget required the approval of both the Legislature and the Executive.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali) said that this subject had given rise to many difficulties but had not led to a confrontation with the government. The main problem was the poor financial state of the country as a whole. Another difficulty was checking the actual expenditure. It was not clear whether parliament had to justify to the Minister of Finance the actual spending of the money.

Sir David LIDDERDALE (UK) said that the questionnaire should not be drawn up to accommodate every possible response. It was up to those who replied to the questionnaire to explain the situation in their own countries.

Mr. KIRBY (Canada) said he was also interested in who certified the parliamentary spending. The Auditor General was a servant of the House of Commons but there had been an unhappy previous experience of him being invited in to find economies in the House itself. It was now a question of whether he should have similar access to the Senate. Staff salaries were usually set by linkage to public service salaries. He was also interested in whether there was any literature of the comparative cost of parliament as a percentage of government spending. The cost of parliament probably stayed very low as a proportion of total expenditure.

Mr. CHARPIN said that the budget of the French Senate had stayed proportionately the same for many years in relation to overall government spending.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that a question on this topic would give rise to difficulties for federal systems where total government spending might appear lower than in non-federal systems.

Mr. JACOBSON said that although the Knesset had passed a law establishing a National Auditor he was not authorized to investigate parliamentary spending.

Mr. MAHRAN (Egypt) submitted a note as follows:

The People's Assembly Law and Rules of Procedure contain the provisions related to the People's Assembly budget and accounts while the Constitution does not contain any such provisions.

These provisions stipulate the independence of the People's Assembly budget included as one gross number in the general budget of the state. The Rules of Procedure of the Assembly have stated in detail the provisions to be followed in preparing the budget.

It is stated that the Assembly draft budget is prepared by the Assembly Bureau at least two months before the beginning of the fiscal year. The Speaker then transfers the draft to the Plan and Budget Committee, since it is the committee for Assembly accounts, to prepare a report on it. This in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. This report is then conveyed to the General Committee of the Assembly which forwards it with its opinion to the Assembly. The Assembly shall approve its detailed budget after approving the State's general budget.

The People's Assembly Rules of Procedure contain a special provision to request additional funds, when the funds included in its budget are not sufficient to meet its expenditures or if an urgent expenditure, not expected on preparing the Assembly budget, comes up. The Rules of Procedure state that the Assembly Bureau prepares a statement on the required additional funds. The Speaker then refers it to the Committee of Accounts—the Plan and Budget Committee—to make a report on it to the Assembly. The Ministry of Finance is then notified of the required additional funds.

The Assembly Rules of Procedure give the Assembly Bureau the right to choose where to deposit the Assembly funds, which are not to be spent without a permit signed by the Secretary General or his Deputy.

It is worth mentioning that the Assembly detailed budget is published in the Assembly records which are, in turn, published in the official gazette and its supplement on this subject.

As for the point raised by Mr. Jacobson in his paper in which he posed certain questions concerning the extent of the government's interference in the Assembly budget and whether the government can object to the Assembly budget or request the Speaker to reduce it according to the government's financial regulations; we say that there is no provision in the Assembly Law or Rules of Procedure on this matter. Nevertheless, the Assembly is supposed to abide, when preparing its budget, by the state's economic policy general guidelines including the financial policy. Moreover the Assembly, though it has an independent budget, takes into consideration the Unity of the State general budget, of which the Assembly budget is a part.

However, in 1967, when the Assembly sent its budget to the Ministry of Finance before War had broken out, then it was necessary to reduce that budget. Consequently the Ministry of Finance asked the Speaker to make a budget reduction, and it was actually reduced.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr. Jacobson for introducing the topical discussion and for agreeing to revise his draft questionnaire. The questionnaire would be circulated after the session and in time for Mr. Jacobson to compile a draft report, based on the replies, in advance of the spring session 1990.

**B. Report on the Parliamentary Budget: rapporteur
Mr. Samuel Jacobson, Secretary General of the
Knesset (Israel). Adopted at the Pyongyang session,
April-May 1991**

I. Prefatory Note

1. Widespread interest among members in questions concerning the parliamentary budget, as expressed at the 1989 London session, led the Association to decide on the circulation of a questionnaire on the subject, and the preparation of a report. The first draft of the report was taken up at the 1990 Spring Session in Nicosia and the second at the 1991 Spring Session in Pyongyang.

2. The last study by the Association on the budget of parliaments was made in 1979. That useful and comprehensive report, by Mr. Jean Priou (France—National Assembly), gave attention to all phases of the budget process. The present study is based on a more concise questionnaire, its main emphasis being on parliamentary autonomy with respect to its budget.

3. The report is based on 32 replies from 26 parliaments. Some bicameral parliaments sent a separate reply for each House: Australia (Senate; House of Representatives), Austria, Belgium (Senate; Chamber of Representatives), Cameroon, Canada (House of Commons), Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France (Senate; National Assembly), Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrat; Bundestag), Greece, Iceland, India (Lok Sabha), Israel, Italy (Chamber of Deputies; Senate), Japan (House of Councillors; House of Representatives), Republic of Korea, Malta, the Netherlands (Second Chamber), Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland (Federal Assembly), United Kingdom (House of Lords; House of Commons), Zaire.

II. General Budgetary Arrangements

4. In nearly every country the parliamentary budget forms part of the general state budget and is published, though in some cases it may appear in separate documents. Generally, it appears as a schedule to the relevant legislation, together with the schedules for other government departments. In Australia all items of parliamentary expenditure, except the salaries of Senators and Members, are covered by separate legislation—the Appropriations

(Parliamentary Departments) Bill. The autonomy of each House in Italy is guaranteed by the constitution, and each publishes its own budget. The estimates of each House for a period of three years are reported to the Treasury, and the annual amount may be readjusted each year as required. In the United Kingdom, the House of Commons budget for administration is not presented to parliament by the government though it appears as part of the Supply Estimates in the same series as expenditure on government departments.

5. Budgetary arrangements are different for each of the two Houses in the bicameral parliaments of Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Italy and the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom there are further separate parliamentary budgets. The British House of Commons has one budget for nearly all costs related to Members, and a second budget covering staff salaries and administrative costs. It has, in addition, other separate budgets, described below, which it shares with the House of Lords.

6. The Swedish Riksdag divides its budget into two parts, the first part comprising the items related to Members, staff and administration, and the second, appropriations to the Parliamentary Authorities, i.e. the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Parliamentary Auditors, the Board of the Bank of Sweden and the Delegation for the Nordic Council. A similar parliamentary authority is included in the budget of the German Bundestag—the Defence Commissioner, who is appointed by the Bundestag to protect soldiers' basic rights and to facilitate parliamentary control in the field of defence. In Japan, the budget of the Diet provides for the expenditures of the Judges Indictment Committee and the Judges Impeachment Court.

III. The Preparation of (the Budget

7. The process of preparing the parliamentary budget differs from one parliament to another and often varies for each House of the same bicameral parliament. As might be expected, the initial drawing up of the budget is generally the task of the appropriate parliamentary officials. In respect of the procedure which follows, up to inclusion of the parliamentary estimates in the general budget proposal, the parliaments can be conveniently grouped.

8. The presiding officer of the House has the dominant role in proposing the budget in Australia, Cyprus, the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundestag), Greece, India, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philip-

piners, and Rwanda. In Iceland this responsibility lies jointly with the President of the United Althing, the President of the Upper House and the President of the Lower House. In Greece, India (Lok Sabha) and the Philippines, the estimates are considered by a parliamentary committee before their approval by the Speaker. In the Australian Senate, the Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing, to which the estimates are first referred, exists to assist the President in determining the proposed expenditures, and he is its chairman. In Japan, the presiding officer of each House determines the budget in consultation with the Standing Committee on Rules and Administration. The draft budget approved by the President of the German Bundestag forms the basis of the budget drawn up by the budget commission of the Council of Elders, on which every parliamentary group is represented according to its strength in the House. Similarly in Israel, it is the Speaker's proposal which is considered by the House Committee (jointly with the Finance Committee) for approval.

9. In a number of parliaments the primary authority for the budget rests with the presidium or Bureau, so that the President of the Chamber still has the key role: Austria, Belgium (Senate), Denmark, the German Bundesrat, Italy, the Second Chamber of the Netherlands, and Zaire. In the Bundesrat, the presidium draws up the budget after it has deliberated in the Permanent Advisory Council, whose composition is like that of the Council of Elders in the other House. The presidium in both Italian House and in the Belgium Senate considers the budget proposed by the Questeurs, those Members who are in charge of internal administration and financial matters. In Denmark, the presidium of the Folketing submits its budget proposal for scrutiny to the Standing Orders Committee. In Zaire, the Bureau, after approving the budget of the Legislative Council, transmits it to the Budget Sub-Committee in the Ministry of the Budget, where it is finally determined.

10. Instead of a presidium there may be a different collegial body, chaired by the presiding officer of the House, which has the primary role in regard to the parliamentary budget, to deal with its administration budget: the Board of Internal Economy in Canada (House of Commons); the Staff Advisory Committee in the Sri Lanka Parliament; the Board of Administration in the Swedish Riksdag; the House of Commons Commission in the British House of Commons. The British House of Commons Commission includes a Government Minister (Leader of the House) and a nominee of the Leader of the Opposition as well as three other Members besides the Speaker. The Staff Advisory Committee in Sri Lanka consists of the Speaker, Minister of Finance, Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition.

11. In Switzerland the joint Administrative Commission of both Houses, which includes the Presidents of both Houses, sets up a proposal for the parliamentary budget, which is transmitted to the Committee of Accounts, which finally determines the draft budget. The Administrative Commission can either accept modification or bring the matter before Parliament for decision.

12. In a few parliaments the presiding officer of the House takes no part in the budget-making process. In Finland and the British House of Lords a parliamentary committee considers and approves the budget—the Office Committee in Finland, and the Finance Sub-Committee of the Offices Committee in the House of Lords. The British House of Commons budget for members' salaries, pensions and allowances, is drawn up by parliamentary officials in consultation with the Treasury, on the basis of the relevant statutory provisions and Resolutions of the House, and no other parliamentary authority is involved until after the government presents that budget to the House.

13. The Questeurs have the primary role in the preparation and approval of the parliamentary budget in France, Cameroon, and the Belgian Chamber of Representatives. In France, the Questeurs of both Houses meet as a joint committee to decide finally on each of the two budget proposals; the Swiss parliament makes use of a similar joint co-ordinating committee, not consisting of Questeurs. In the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, the Questeurs' proposal is transmitted to the Accounting Committee, which determines the budget to be submitted to the assembly for approval. After each Chamber approves its detailed budget, it is neither communicated to the Minister of the Budget nor controlled by the other Chamber. The state budget shows only the total amount of credit as the disposal of each Chamber.

IV. The Government and the Budget

14. Regulations of the governments economic policy apply to the parliamentary budget in Cameroon, Cyprus, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malta, the Netherlands (Second Chamber), Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Zaire, and to expenditures for building maintenance of the British parliament, where this item in fact appears in the budget of a government department. In the Republic of Korea, the estimates fixed by the Speaker are in accordance with the budget-planning guideline set by the Minister of Economic Planning. Government economic policy does not apply to the parliamentary budget in Finland, France, India, the Philippines, and to

the administration budget of the British House of Commons. However, in France, the United Kingdom, and Denmark, the linkage of salaries of Members and parliamentary staff to the levels prevailing in the public service are seen as a measure of conformity with government policy; in Iceland, Althing staff salaries are so linked with the same purpose, while members' salaries and allowances are fixed by the State Salaries Arbitration Court. Many parliaments abide by government policy on the budget, of their free will: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Switzerland. In Sweden, where demands made on other central authorities to reduce costs have never been made on the Riksdag, the position is not clear on this point.

15. The government has the right to limit the parliamentary budget in Austria, Cameroon, Cyprus, India, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands (Second Chamber), the Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Zaire. In Japan, the government makes necessary adjustments and draws up the parliamentary budget based on the demands of both Houses. However, in India, once approved by the Speaker of each House, the budget is treated by the government as final. In Iceland the Cabinet has in practice assumed the right to make changes in the budget proposal of the Althing in line with its own policies. However, when the Althing feels that its activities or administrative services would be unduly hampered by these charges, it will see to it that the appropriate amendments are made before parliamentary approval of the budget. In the United Kingdom, a "cash limit" is applied by the government only to the parliamentary item for building maintenance and furniture, which is included in the budget of an Agency within the Department of the Environment. By turning to the parliamentary authorities, the government may seek to reduce parliamentary estimates in Australia, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Korea. The government cannot limit the parliamentary budget in Canada, Finland, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland.

16. In many parliaments, the budget does not require government approval; Belgium, Cameroon, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland. While Australia's parliament may also be said to belong to that group, the bill to give effect to the parliamentary estimates, which is introduced by the government, reflects the government's final position on the estimates submitted. Government approval is required in Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Malta, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Zaire, and the United Kingdom, where, however, the administration budget of the House of

Commons is excepted. In the Netherlands, the budget is ultimately approved jointly by the government and the Second and First Chambers.

V. Legislative Procedure

17. Parliament's approval of the parliamentary budget is required in every country. The legislative process, of course, comes after any government approval that may have been required.

18. The legislative proceedings for approval of the parliamentary budget may differ from that followed for the budgets of government department, generally with a view to easing it through the process. In Italy there are not the same number of readings as on legislation; however, Senate approval of the budget of the Chamber of Deputies is required. In Denmark and India (Lok Sabha), the parliamentary budget is adopted without amendments or comments. In France, the National Assembly and the Senate do not take up each other's estimates, and in each House the Finance Committee refrains from examining in detail the budget of its own assembly. In Israel, the Knesset budget is taken up by a mixed House-Finance Committee, unlike most of the government's estimates which are dealt with by the Finance Committee alone. In some parliaments the budget is treated differently from ordinary legislation merely to the extent that the general state budget itself is dealt with differently: Australia, Austria, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom. In Cameroon, Canada's House of Commons, Cyprus, and Rwanda, the procedure followed on the budget of the House is the same as that required for any other legislation.

VI. Members' Proposals for Government Financing

19. The way is open to a Member of Parliament to propose government financing of a parliamentary activity in Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Sweden and Switzerland. In Switzerland a Member can make proposals to increase or decrease parliamentary or government expenditures. In practice a Member would not take such a step in Denmark, Israel or Italy. In Iceland, Israel and Italy, a Member would prefer to propose the financing through the parliamentary budget. The Member's right to propose such government financing exists only in theory in the German Bundestag and in the French Houses, since French Members cannot make a proposal that would create a public charge. In the Bundestag,

the principle of clear and true presentation of the budget, which follows from the Basic Law, would prevent the inclusion of a parliamentary expenditure in the budget of a government department. In the Greek Parliament, only a member of the Finance Committee has the right to propose anything relating to the parliamentary budget. Members are barred from making any formal proposal for government financing of a parliamentary activity in Australia, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Finland, the French Senate, the German Bundesrat, India, Malta, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, and Zaire. In the parliaments of Australia, Canada, Cyprus, France, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom, a Member does not have the right to propose any amendment to increase expenditure.

VII. The Size of the Budget

20. The following table shows the size of parliamentary budgets, in descending order, as a proportion of national government expenditure, currently and some ten years ago:

<i>Parliament</i>	<i>Percentage currently</i>	<i>Percentage ten years ago</i>
Cameroon	0.85	0.85
Iceland	0.57	0.54
Rwanda	0.51	0.65
Cyprus	0.31	0.21
Sri Lanka	0.245	0.066
Federal Republic of Germany		
Bundestag	0.211	0.152
Bundesrat	0.005	0.004
France		
National Assembly	0.17	0.17
Senate	0.10	0.10
Canada		
House of Commons	0.16	0.16

<i>Parliament</i>	<i>Percentage currently</i>	<i>Percentage ten years ago</i>
Belgium		
Chamber of Representatives	0.15	0.1
Senate	0.096	0.076
Japan (both Houses)	0.15	0.17
Denmark	0.14	0.1
Australia (both Houses)	0.12	0.19
Switzerland	0.12	0.1
Italy		
Chamber of Deputies	0.104	0.07
Senate	0.064	0.045
Israel	0.1	0.05
United Kingdom		
(both Houses)	0.099	0.065
House of Lords	0.0002	—
Netherlands		
Second Chamber	0.055	0.056
Zaire	0.011	—
Greece	0.003	0.0014
Austria (both Houses)	0.0015	—
Sweden	0.0015	0.0015

Taking into account the different extra-budgetary arrangements to be noted below, and the fact that not all bicameral parliaments have replied for both Houses, the figures in the table should be treated with caution. Moreover, the great spread in the figures makes it hazardous, in any case, to draw generalisations. Nevertheless, the figures show clearly that for most parliaments the budget is larger today than it was ten years ago. In the parliaments of Australia, Japan, the Netherlands (Second Chamber), and Rwanda, the budget is smaller today. In Cameroon, Canada (House of Commons), France and Sweden, the budget has remained about the same. In the bicameral parliaments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United

Kingdom, the budget of the popularly elected House is many times greater than that of the second House. In France and Italy, the budget of that House is substantially larger than that of the Senate.

VIII. Increasing the Budget

21. Supplementary appropriations, subject to the same proceedings as the original parliamentary budget, can be enacted if needed, in Australia, Canada (House of Commons), Cyprus, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany (Bundestag), Iceland, Israel, Malta, the Netherlands (Second Chamber), Sri Lanka, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. While supplementary parliamentary budgets have been fairly common in recent years in Sweden and the United Kingdom, they have never been resorted to in Israel and the Netherlands (Second Chamber). However, when a supplementary budget of the government provides for general increases, Israel's Knesset is included as well. When the Knesset needs additional funds the Speaker will prefer to make a transfer from another item in the parliamentary budget. To do this he requires the assent of the Finance Committee.

22. The budgets of some parliaments can be increased without resorting to the enactment of a supplementary budget: Australia, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, India (Lok Sabha), Japan, Republic of Korea. In Japan, the Diet can amend and increase its budget by decision. In the German Bundestag, the Minister of Finance may approve excess expenditure up to a certain amount. If the additional sum exceeds that amount, a supplementary budget must be passed. In the Bundesrat such excess expenditure requires compensation by savings in other parts of the House budget. In Australia there is provision in the original parliamentary budget bill for an Advance to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives to meet urgent and unforeseen expenditure. Only additional expenditure, which may be required later in the financial year, will entail a second parliamentary-budget bill. There is a special credit for the Greek parliament in the event of unforeseen expenses, but if that is not sufficient, it can decide to ask the Minister of Finance for further sums. India's Lok Sabha too can turn to the Minister of Finance for supplementary grants. The Korean National Assembly needs government approval to secure an increase in any item of its budget. There is no provision for increasing the budgets of the parliaments of Austria, Belgium, Cameroon, Finland, France, Italy, Rwanda, and Zaire. However, in Italy, as noted earlier, each House can readjust its triennial

appropriation annually and itself sets the limits to the amount of increase in its budget.

IX. Extra-Budgetary Items

23. As nearly all of the items that were listed in the questionnaire are largely provided for in most parliamentary budgets, interest lies rather in those items not so included but covered by government departments or other sources. In Belgium, Cameroon, France, Italy, Malta, and Zaire, the budget includes all items of expenditure.

24. Maintenance of the parliament buildings in Cyprus, the Netherlands and Rwanda, is included in the state budget under another head. In Denmark, the Ministry of Housing pays for the maintenance of the exterior of the Folketing building. Expenditure on new buildings of the German Bundestag is included in the budget of the Ministry for Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development, since matters concerning the buildings of the constitutional organs are dealt with by the Federal Building Office which is part of that ministry. The grounds of Parliament Hill in Canada are maintained by the National Capital Commission. As the two British Houses share the Palace of Westminster, maintenance of buildings and furniture are provided for by a separate budget for the two Houses combined, and administered by the Property Services Agency of the Department of the Environment. In Italy, the restoration of buildings of the Chamber of Deputies is partly the responsibility of the Minister of Public Works. In Switzerland, expenditure for maintenance or possibly new construction of buildings, and for furniture, is included in the Federal Building Office Budget.

25. Salaries and allowances of Senators and Members in Australia are provided for by way of Special Appropriation and do not form part of the parliamentary budget.

26. The pensions of Members in Canada, Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Israel and Japan, are not included in the parliamentary budget. In Canada, the Department of Supply and Services takes care of Members' superannuation. In Israel, the pensions of Members are paid by the Treasury under a general head though administered by the Knesset, while staff pensions are entirely taken care of by the Treasury. In Iceland, the pensions of Members and staff are both administered and paid by the State Social Security and Insurance.

Constitutional and Parliamentary Information

16

27. Various health services are provided to Canadian Members by the Health and Welfare Department, while the employer's share of their health and dental insurance plans is paid by the Treasury Board. However, in Zaire, the medical and pharmaceutical expenses of personnel are paid from the budget of the Legislative Council.

28. Printing costs are not included in the parliamentary budgets of Cyprus, India, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, but appear under other budget heads. In the United Kingdom, the expenditure of each of the two Houses for printing is identified separately in a specific budget of the government printing office.

29. The cost of computer services in the Swiss parliament is shared by parliament and the government. The parliamentary budget includes the personnel costs, while the hardware, software and services appear in the government budget, earmarked as parliamentary appropriations. A Member has the right to a personal computer and printer at government expenses.

30. Postage is not covered by the parliamentary budget in Australia, Canada, Finland, and Sri Lanka and Switzerland. In Finland, postage is paid by the Members themselves. Telephone allowances are not paid by the parliaments of Australia, Cyprus, Sri Lanka and Switzerland. However in Switzerland, the cost of use of telephone and telefax by Members in the parliament building is borne by the post office department. That department also provides free telefax service at home to about a quarter of the Swiss Members (Presidents, Bureau members, presidents of political groups and permanent committees).

31. Security services are provided outside the budget in the parliaments of Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and in the German Bundesrat. In Austria and Switzerland they are included in the budget of the Ministry of the Interior, and in Germany's Bundesrat they are taken care of by the Federal Criminal Investigation Office and the police of the Land of North Rhine Westphalia, where the federal capital of Bonn is situated. In Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are responsible for policing Parliament Hill. In Sri Lanka's parliament, security is in the hands of the Ministry of Defence.

32. The free public transport available to Members in Canada (rail for Members and their families), and Israel (bus and rail), is at the expense of the public services. In Sweden and in Switzerland parliament refunds Members for an annual rail ticket and costs for domestic air travel. In Belgium, Members have the right of free travel on state-controlled transport facilities.

33. Catering services are outside the budget in many parliaments, and managed privately, though in some of these cases they are subsidized by parliament.

34. In Germany's Bundestag and in Israel, the President of the Bundestag and the Speaker of the Knesset administer payments to political parties from the Treasury. There are however significant differences between the practices in the two parliaments. In the Bundestag there is provision for the President to reimburse election campaign expenses to political parties and also to individual candidates for election to the Bundestag and to the European Parliament. In the Knesset, payments, made only to political parties, are statutory and consist of election campaign expenses and a monthly payment for current expenditures, both according to the strength of each party in the Knesset. In both the Bundestag and the Knesset, grants are also made, within the parliamentary budget, to parliamentary groups of the parties represented in the House. Such grants are also made in Iceland, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. Both Belgian Houses make grants to the political groups from the budget.

There are other less common items paid from parliamentary budgets. In Italy, the budget of the Chamber of Deputies includes provision for commissions of inquiry and supervision, and for grants to cultural and scientific institutions. Switzerland, as does the Japanese Diet, provides for the costs of investigating national administration. In Cameroon, the parliamentary budget provides for scholarships. Grants, contributions and subsidies are included in the budget of the Sri Lanka parliament. In Zaire, diverse items such as food and lodging for personnel, aid and relief, are covered by the budget of the Legislative Council.

36. In the British House of Lords, fees are collected from judicial proceedings and, in both the Lords and the Commons, from private bills in aid of the Vote for the budget. In the House of Lords, profits from catering must be, in effect, surrendered to the Treasury.

X. Supervision and Audit

37. The execution of the parliamentary budget is supervised by an outside authority in some parliaments: Accountant-General or other unit of Finance Ministry (Cyprus, Federal Republic of Germany, Israel, Japan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka); State Accounts Supervisors (Iceland—elected by the Althing); Minister for Home Affairs (the Netherlands). In Greece the legality

of parliamentary expenditure is controlled by the Exchequer and Audit Department, while the progress and execution of the expenditure are the responsibility of both the Accounting Office of Parliament and the General Accounting Office. In Switzerland, execution and supervision of payments are the responsibility of the parliament's Accounting Office and the General Accounting Office; supervision of the parliamentary budget lies with the joint Administrative Commission of the two Houses.

38. An Auditor General, or other national office which has responsibility for auditing government departments, audits the parliamentary budget in Australia, Austria, Cyprus, Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. However, in the United Kingdom the head of the National Audit Office is an officer of the House of Commons. In Canada too, the Auditor General is a servant of the House of Commons and conducts an audit of its expenditures from time to time only on invitation. Also in Israel, the State Comptroller, who is elected by a Knesset vote and reports to it, will examine a phase of Knesset administration only if asked by the Speaker to do so. In the Danish Folketing the Standing Orders Committee appoints auditors. Some parliaments are not subject to any external supervision or auditing of the budget: Belgium, Cameroon, Finland, France, India, Italy, Sweden, Zaire. In France, the Senate and the National Assembly set up a parliamentary committee to verify and audit the accounts.

XI. Concluding Observations

39. The parliamentary budget process, as considered in the above report, presents a picture both of diversity and of practices common to large groups of parliaments. Sometimes, what appears at first glance as widely differing procedures, will on closer inspection present a common pattern. A good example is the key role of the presiding officer in the preparation of the budget of parliament, whether acting by himself, with the presidium, or with some other collegial body. In the French parliament, which is one of the notable exceptions to that practice, the use of a joint committee to fix the budgets of both Senate and National Assembly deserves attention as an effective means to secure budgetary co-ordination between the two Houses of a bicameral parliament, as does the example of the Swiss parliament.

40. Costs related to parliament and not included in its budget warrant some clarifications. Though most parliaments involve such costs, the bulk of parliament's expenditures is made, as a rule, according to clearly designated appropriations, though some are covered within the estimates of other government departments. Where such excepted items are clearly identified as parliamentary appropriations, they are in effect part of the parliamentary budget under whatever ministries they are listed. It is when parliamentary estimates are absorbed under general heads of other departments that they are truly outside the parliamentary budget. In the interest of a true presentation of the parliamentary budget it appears desirable to earmark clearly every item of projected parliamentary expenditure wherever it may appear in the general state budget.

41. The wide range of parliamentary budgets in respect of size, as a proportion of national government expenditure, suggests that it might be instructive, in a future study by the Association, to compare parliamentary budgets in greater detail as regards their components, and the appropriation for each item as a proportion of the whole. In such a study, consideration should of course be given also to factors such as the size of parliaments, the length of their sessions, and the degree to which a Member's service in parliament is regarded as a full-time occupation.

42. While the majority of parliaments do not require government approval ultimately of their budget, the number of parliaments subject in some way to government policy with respect to their budget is even larger. The government, after all, is responsible for the entire state budget. Yet, since even the largest parliamentary budgets are well below one percent of the general budget, the question naturally suggests itself whether it would not be preferable, in the interest of parliament's sovereignty to assure its complete autonomy as regards its own budget. Where a parliament complies voluntarily with the government's budget policy, as is the case in a significant number of countries, there is of course no trenching upon its autonomy. In the practice of the British House of Commons of assuring absolute autonomy for its administration budget, while preparing a separate budget for the Members' salaries, allowances and pensions, there is a distinct propriety. The latter budget does not go through the hands of any House authority, other than officials, until the legislative stage. In the delicate matter of Members' emoluments, the example of Iceland's Althing, where Member's salaries and allowances are determined by an outside quasi-judicial body, merits attention.

43. As to the post-audit of parliament's expenditures, one may question whether tax payers anywhere would regard the examination of its accounts by an independent authority as an unjustified encroachment on its sovereignty.

44. It might seem that since parliament everywhere has the last word on its budget in the legislative process, it can in effect undo any changes made by the government. However, bearing in mind political realities, with the government commanding a parliamentary majority, one should not expect this to occur often.

II. The Uruguayan Parliamentary System

Extract from the minutes of the Uruguay session, October 1990

Mr. Mario FARACHIO, Second Secretary of the Senate of Uruguay, spoke as follows:

"On behalf of my colleagues Dr. Juan Haran URIOSTE, Secretary of the Senate, Dr. Horacio CATALURDA and Señor Martin GARCIA NIN, Secretaries of the House of Representatives, and myself, it is an honour to extend to you a cordial welcome to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. We willingly accepted the responsibility to organise this session, in conjunction with the 84th Inter-Parliamentary Conference. This is the first time we have been able to take part in meetings of the Association which we joined in 1986.

In those four years I have come to respect the Association and consider it a very useful instrument in improving the work of parliamentary administration in the difficult and delicate duty of supporting legislative work. Although it has belonged to the IPU for only a short time, the Uruguayan Parliament has a broad and rich institutional experience. On 18th July 1830, when the first Constitution was solemnly adopted, a republican system of government was chosen with the separation of Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers. A bicameral system of parliament was provided for in Articles 83 and 84 of the Constitution.

I do not want, at this stage, to go into the detail about the different constitutional provisions, the working of the two Chambers and their Committees, the Standing Orders and administrative rules because tomorrow we will go to the Legislative Palace in Montevideo and that will give us an opportunity to provide more information and answer all your questions. This visit will also give you the opportunity to see the most majestic building in the country which was constructed with pride to be the seat of the legislative power and was inaugurated on the 25th August, 1925 to mark the centenary of the declaration of our independence.

The Senate and the House of Representatives are equal under the Constitution. There are thirty members of the Senate and its Presiding Officer is the Vice-President of the Republic and President of the General Assembly. The House of Representatives has 99 Deputies and its Presiding Officer is elected each year by the House itself. Both Senators and Deputies are elected for a five year period and the elections take place at the same time as the election of the President of the Republic and of the departmental (regional) authorities in the different parts of the country. Voting is compulsory and secret. It takes place under an electoral law which has been in place for many years.

Senators are elected by proportional representation with the whole country considered as a single constituency. Deputies are elected by proportional representation within each of the departments (regions). The system reflects the population in each department and guarantees a minimum representation for the smallest.

In its 160 years of existence the legislative power of Uruguay has suffered one period of suspension, a phenomenon which caused us much sadness and was common to many countries of Latin America. Nonetheless we are proud of the history and the current practice of our Parliament which has included in its membership the most prominent figures in national politics at the most significant legislative times. In our library of proceedings of the session of both Houses we have the verbatim reports of meetings in which the most brilliant, compassionate and enlightening debates have taken place and these serve as an example and a main source of reference to new generations of Members of Parliament.

It is clear that legislative work, like the conduct of public affairs, has become more complex and requires considerable technical support. I hope you will permit me to add a few reflections on the future needs of the Uruguayan Parliament and my hopes that the Association will be able to help less technically developed parliaments to advance our projects and improve our work. The internal organisation of parliament directly reflects the legal system, customs and idiosyncrasies of the country itself. Our main ambition is to provide legislators, whether better or less well educated, with information, with better technical support and databases on comparative legislation. We are also considering setting up a parliamentary study centre.

We are in the process of introducing more advanced information technology and I hope that through informal discussions in the next few days I will be able to learn much about arrangements in other countries and to receive helpful advice. Reading the documents of the Association which were circulated, as well as taking part in its meetings, is very useful for us, so let me

add one final reflection. It is clear from our knowledge of the Association that it is an important centre for gathering and circulating to all members not only information on the organisation of parliaments and parliamentary procedures and constitutional systems, which it does very well, but also in the legal provisions which apply in different countries and on solutions to the main issues of the day which occupy the attention of all countries in matters such as education, social welfare, the eradication of poverty and economic equilibrium and many other fundamental issues concerned with progress and the well-being of humanity."

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr. Farachio for the presentation.

In response to questions from Dr. ALZUBI (Jordan), Mr. FARACHIO said that within the Government the Vice-President of the Republic (and therefore President of the Senate and the General Assembly) had no specific responsibilities. His executive function was to take the place of the President in case of temporary or permanent incapacity.

Mr. QUIROZ (Venezuela) asked about the development of information technology in the Uruguayan Parliament.

Mr. FARACHIO said that there had been a lack of technological development in the past and, like many other parliaments in Latin America, the Uruguayan Parliament had become much too dependent on the government for technical resources. He felt that he could benefit from the advice and experience of other countries.

Mr. MBOZO'O (Cameroon) asked how the President of the General Assembly decided to which Chamber draft legislation should first be sent. Mr. FARACHIO said that legislation could start in either Chamber and a particular text would be allocated to one Chamber or the other depending on the workload of the two bodies. In the end legislation had to pass through both Chambers using identical procedure. The amendments made by one Chamber had to be considered by the other until agreement was reached. In the absence of agreement between the two Chambers a joint sitting of the two, in the form of the General Assembly, was held. Once legislation had been passed it was sent to the Government to be promulgated. The budget and international treaties could also start their consideration in either Chamber.

In response to questions from Mr. GARCIA (Venezuela), Mr. FARACHIO said that: (i) any Member of Parliament could introduce draft legislation as could the Government. Changes to the Constitution could be promoted by groups of citizens directly. Only the Government, however, could propose budgetary matters, (ii) The Secretary General was not a

Member of Parliament. Two Secretaries in each Chamber were chosen by the vote of the Chambers concerned and they could be re-elected, (iii) The Senate had to give permission for the President of the Republic to leave the country, (iv) The Senate's agreement was required for the appointment of Ambassadors and senior military officers, (v) The Government presented reports on each Ministry each year. No direct political consequences flowed from these. The Ministers could be called to the Senate or the House of Representatives to answer questions (Article 118). Motions of censure could be passed on individual Ministers or collectively on the Government (Article 147). It was also possible for Parliament to be dissolved and fresh elections called.

Mr. NYS (Belgium) asked about the control of constitutionality of laws. Mr. FARACHIO said that the Supreme Court could hold that a particular law passed by parliament was unconstitutional. Another law would then have to be passed in order to repeal the first law.

Mr. ORBAN (Belgium) asked whether there was weighted voting when both Houses met in the General Assembly. Mr. FARACHIO said that voting in the General Assembly depended on the political composition of the 130 Senators and Deputies, so the 99 Deputies would not automatically out-vote 30 Senators. As each part of the country had at least two Deputies regional factors would also be taken into account.

In response to Mr. FLOMBAUM (Argentina), Mr. FARACHIO said that the proposal to appoint an Ambassador included the country to whom he was being sent.

Mr. GARCIA asked about criminal immunity of Members of Parliament and whether there was an ethical code of conduct. Mr. FARACHIO said there was a de facto unwritten code since both Houses had the right to exercise vigilance over their own members. A Senator had been expelled recently but had subsequently been re-elected. This was exceptional.

Mr. OLLE-LAPRUNE (France) asked about the regularity of sessions. Mr. FARACHIO said that parliament sat for most of the year other than a recess provided in the Constitution from 15th December to the 1st March. When an election was due to be held the recess would start in October prior to the election and parliament would meet again on the 15th February.

In response to Mr. SWEETMAN (UK), Mr. FARACHIO said that the Constitution required that the Speaker of the House of Representatives be elected annually. There was usually an agreement at the start of the legislative term to provide for the rotation of the office between representatives of the different parties so there was, in practice, a change in Speaker each year.

At present four parties were represented in parliament but no one party was likely to have an absolute majority.

Mr. CHARPIN (France) asked about the role of Committees and legislation. Mr. FARACHIO said that both Houses had permanent Committees with set terms of reference. Special committees could also be appointed. There were 16 Committees in the House of Representatives. In the Senate the involvement of 30 Senators in several different Committees caused problems especially when special committees were set up.

In response to Mr. FLOMBAUM (Argentina), Mr. FARACHIO said that the Committees reported on legislation and their reports were put on the agenda of the Plenary. The Committee's decision took the form of an opinion which might or might not be accepted by the Plenary. Minority reports could be produced by Committees.

In response to Mr. WHEELER-BOOTH (UK), Mr. FARACHIO accepted that there was some discussion within the country about the relative efficiency of parliament and its political legitimacy. Legitimacy depended on popular election but there had been some decline in financial control over the government. Inevitably parties represented in parliament did not necessarily share the same legislative priorities as the government. What elected Members saw as a need to improve draft legislation could be portrayed by the government as unnecessary delay. No party had an absolute majority and so draft legislation had to be worked out through compromise and political exchange.

Mrs. HUBER (Switzerland) asked whether disputes between the two Houses occurred frequently and lasted for a long time. Mr. FARACHIO said the budget had to be considered and approved in each Chamber within 45 days. Each Chamber then had a 15 day period to give an opinion on the decision taken by the other Chamber. There was a further 20 days in which the General Assembly could resolve differences. This made a total of 125 days. Each MP had the right to speak for 30 minutes in the general debate and for 20 minutes on each item of the budget. A rapporteur could speak for longer. This tended to protract proceedings but there was no question of filibustering.

Mr. NDIAYE (Senegal) asked about incompatibilities. Mr. FARACHIO said the Constitution provided that being a Member of Parliament was incompatible with any other public office holdings. It was permissible for legislators to have outside interests, but the rules of each Chamber provided that these had to be declared. Parliamentary life was fairly full-time so there was not much scope for other activity.

The PRESIDENT thanked Mr. FARACHIO for answering these questions.

Annex

Question and Answer Session with Dr. Horacio Catalurda, Secretary of the House of Representatives in Montevideo

In response to Mr. CHARPIN (France), Dr. CATALURDA said that the Chamber in which the House of Representatives sat had a capacity of 130 because the General Assembly met in the same room. When just the House was sitting only 99 Deputies would be present. Ministers could attend, sit where they liked and take part in debate on their reports.

Mr. LAUNDY (Canada) asked about the planning of the agenda. Dr. CATALURDA said that a special committee set the agenda in the Senate but in the House of Representatives the co-ordinators of the political parties (Whips) formed an informal group to set the order of business. Ministers could reply to questions put to them by MPs.

MR. IDRISSE KAITOUNI (Morocco) asked who presided over the General Assembly. Dr. CATALURDA replied that the Vice-President of the Republic, as President of the Senate, presided over the General Assembly. If the Vice-President was performing the duties of President of the Republic in the absence of the latter another Senator took his place as President of the Senate and of the General Assembly. It was possible for the Vice-President to vote for a Bill in his capacity as President of the Senate and then later to veto it while substituting for the President of the Republic in his executive capacity. The Vice-President was elected in the same election as the President of the Republic and Senators and Deputies.

In reply to Dr. ALZUBI (Jordan), Dr. CATALURDA said that each House had two secretaries of equal status. They produced a draft order of business based on the results of committee work and these were put to the group of co-ordinators (Whips) working with the President to set the agenda.

In response to Mr. TRAVERSA (Italy), Dr. CATALURDA said that the usual quorum in the House of Representatives was 25 out of 99 but international treaties and taxation measures required the presence of 50 members. The House usually sat from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and to prolong the sitting to midnight required 33 members to be present.

In response to Mr. NDIAYE (Senegal), Dr. CATALURDA said that in addition to the normal pattern of regular sessions, extraordinary sessions could be summoned by the President or by a group of Senators. Points of order during sessions were dealt with by the President.

Mr. MBOZO'O (Cameroon) asked about the seating arrangements. Dr. CATALURDA said there were no fixed places for individual deputies but they could sit in a group if they wished. In the Senate there was a fixed seat for each individual.