

Member of the Congress of the United States, I am proud to be a politician". Gillis regarded the prerogatives and the power of his great office as an instrument through which he could better serve his God and his fellowman. He was frequently quoting passages from the Bible that indicated his respect and esteem for the elderly. He said, "Old wood to burn, old wine to drink, old authors to read and old friends to trust". Gillis Long had ever a helping hand held out to those who needed assistance whether they were young, frail or having some other requirement for aid. Gillis Long burned with concern for his fellowman, and he used his great power, which was extraordinary, in their service.

When Anthony came upon the body of his fallen foe Brutus lying dead on the floor of his tent after Philippi, he stood and gazed down upon this man and soliloquized in words that I think most appropriate to describe Gillis Long "His life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say for all the world, 'this was a man'".

#### HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore (Mr. **ATKINS**). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. **MICHEL**] is recognized for 5 minutes.

● Mr. **MICHEL**. Mr. Speaker, those of us in Congress are so close to the legislative process that we sometimes forget that the way in which a bill becomes law is not clearly understood by many of our fellow Americans. I receive inquiries from time to time about this question. I have prepared a brief summary of the process in the hope it may be useful to anyone who is interested in the machinery of government.

#### HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

Ours is a Government of the people, by the people, for the people. It is not a pure democracy. It is a republic in a democracy. It is a representative democracy.

Our laws are the embodiment of the wishes and wants, the ideas and ideals of the American people as expressed through their Representatives in the Congress: 435 in the House of Representatives and 100 in the Senate. Any Member of the House or Senate may introduce a bill embodying a proposed law or revision of existing laws, at any time when his respective House is in session. When introduced, the bill will be entered in the Journal of the House and the title and sponsors of it printed in the **CONGRESSIONAL RECORD** of that day.

#### EACH BILL NUMBERED

Each bill introduced is assigned a number by the clerk of each House and referred to the committee having jurisdiction over the subject matter by the presiding officer, that is, the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate. Copies of the bill are printed by the Government Printing Office and made publicly available from the congressional document rooms.

Acting through its chairman, the committee decides whether a bill should be taken up by the full committee or referred to a subcommittee for its initial consideration.

#### THE DELIBERATIVE STAGE

The committee's deliberations are the most important stage of the legislative process. It is here that detailed study of the proposed legislation is made and where people are given the right to present their views in public hearings. When the chairman has set

a date for public hearings it is generally announced by publication in the **CONGRESSIONAL RECORD**.

Copies of the bill under consideration by the committee are customarily sent to the executive departments or agencies concerned with the subject matter for their official views to be presented in writing or by oral testimony before the committee. The number of witnesses, pro and con, heard by the committee is largely dictated by the importance of the proposed legislation and degree of public interest in it.

#### TESTIMONY HEARD

The transcript of the testimony taken is available for inspection in the individual committee offices. Quite frequently, dependent on the importance of the subject matter, the committee hearings on a bill are printed and copies made available to the public.

After conclusion of the hearings the committee proceeds to meet in executive sessions—sometimes referred to as "markup" sessions—to discuss the bill in detail and to consider such amendments as any member of the committee may wish to offer. Each committee has its own rules of procedure but they generally conform to the rules of the House itself.

#### THE COMMITTEE VOTE

By a formal vote of the committee, it decides whether to report favorably to the House the bill with or without committee amendments. A committee report must accompany the bill, setting forth the nature of the bill and reasons for the committee's recommended approval. The report sets forth specifically the committee amendments and, in compliance with the rules of each House, indicates all changes the bill would make in existing law. Any committee member, individually or jointly, may file additional, supplemental or minority views to accompany the majority committee report. The committee report, accompanying the bill, is viewed by the courts and the administrative agencies as the most important document as to the intent of the Congress in the proposed legislation.

#### AFTER REPORTING

When a bill is reported by the committee it is placed on the appropriate calendar. The majority leadership decides how and when the bill will be considered on the floor. In general the bill is allowed to remain on the calendar for several days to enable members to become acquainted with its provisions.

In both the House and the Senate innumerable measures of relatively minor importance are disposed of by unanimous consent. In the Senate, where debate is unlimited, major bills are brought up on motion of the majority leader and in the House are called up under a privileged resolution reported from the Rules Committee which fixes the limits of debate and whether amendments may be offered from the floor. The Rules Committee resolution is called a rule for consideration of a bill; a closed rule if no amendments are allowed, as is generally the case in tax bills, and an open rule if amendments can be offered.

#### REACHING CONSENSUS

While there are distant differences between the House and Senate procedures, in general a bill is debated at length with the proponents and opponents presenting their views to acquaint the membership, as well as the general public, with the issues involved, and all with a view to arriving at the consensus. Amendments are frequently offered to make the measure more in conformity with the judgment of the majority. In the course of consideration of the bill there are various parliamentary motions, in

both the House and the Senate, which may be offered to determine the sentiment of the members with respect to the pending legislation. The measure may be postponed to some future date or referred back to the committee which reported it.

With the conclusion of general debate and the reading of the bill for amendments, the question becomes whether the House or Senate, as the case may be, will pass the bill in its final form. The **CONGRESSIONAL RECORD** of the day the bill was under consideration will set forth the verbatim debate on the bill and the disposition made of such amendments as were offered.

#### AFTER PASSAGE

With the passage of a bill by either body it is messaged to the other with the request that they concur. If no action has been taken on the like measure by the body receiving the message the bill is usually referred to the appropriate committee of that body for consideration. Hearings are again held and the bill reported for floor action. On relatively minor or noncontroversial matters the Senate or the House accepts the measure as messaged to it by the other body.

If there are substantial differences between the House and Senate versions of a given bill, the measure is sent to a conference committee which is appointed by the Speaker and the President of the Senate from the ranking committee members of each body having original jurisdiction over the bill. The object of the conference committee is to adjust the differences between the two bodies, and to report back to each its agreement. The report of the conference committee must be in writing and signed by those agreeing thereto and must have the signature of the majority of the conferees of each House.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT

The report of the conference committee cannot be amended and must be accepted or rejected by each House as it stands. If either House finds itself unable to accept the conference committee report a further conference is usually requested.

When the bill has been agreed to in identical form by both bodies a copy of the bill is enrolled, signed by the Speaker and by the President of the Senate, for presentation to the President. The bill becomes law with the President's signature of approval, or it may become law without his signature if he does not return it, with his objections, to the Congress within 10 days of its presentation to him.

If the President should return the bill, with his objections, to the originating body of the Congress, his veto may be overridden by two-thirds of both the House and Senate respectively voting to have the measure become law the President's objections to the contrary notwithstanding. Both the President's veto message and a record of the vote of the individual Members in the motion to override are required by the Constitution and set forth in the **CONGRESSIONAL RECORD**.

#### FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT: MAKING A GOOD INDUSTRY EVEN BETTER

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. **ANNUNZIO**] is recognized for 5 minutes.

● Mr. **ANNUNZIO**. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 237 is a bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to provide