

LAW AND DEMOCRACY WEEK

Course n°8: The Senate (Gary O'Brien)



Gary W. O'Brien, Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments.

He began his career on Parliament Hill in 1975 with the Library of Parliament, after obtaining his Bachelor from Glendon Campus, York University and his Master of Arts in Political Science from Carleton University. He left the Library of Parliament to join the House of Commons as a procedural analyst in 1976. In 1980 he joined the Senate, where he served as Chief of English Journals and Director of Committees until assuming the role of Deputy Clerk in 1999, a position he held until 2006. During his tenure as Chief of English Journals he completed his Ph.D. in Political Science at Carleton University. He has published several articles and book reviews on parliamentary procedure, and presented papers to the Canadian Political Science Association and at events such as the Canadian Presiding Officers' Conference, the Joint Canadian-American Clerks Conference and the Inter-parliamentary Union Conference and Meeting of the Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments.

Overview of the role and Operation of the Senate

A. Size & Membership of the Senate

- Sitting Days & Times

B. Political Parties

C. Powers of the Senate / Constitutional roles

- Constitutional Powers

D. Work of the Senate

- Role & Authority of the Speaker
- Question Period
- Legislation
- Public Policy Review: Investigative Studies of Senate Committees

E. Senate Reform