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THE LEBANESE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

by

Samia Jibran Bikhazi

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in the
Department of Political Studies and Public Administration of
the American University of Beirut
Beirut, Lebanon
1962

(Translation of frontispiece)

Kaslik
Jounieh

Miss Samiah Jibran Bikhazi

I congratulate you on your labour and industry, and hope that you will be fully confident that the Parliamentary System, the topic of your thesis, is the best for our country, Lebanon. As I told you in our conversation, this system, like everything human, is capable of improvement. I believe, however, that its improvement depends more on the character of those who practice it than on any amendments or change to which it may be subjected. The text remains a dead letter unless, in its proper application, it is accompanied by a vital spirit.

With best wishes,

(Signed)

Bisharah Khalil al-Khoury

Kaslik 23 March, 1961.



KASLIK
'JOUNIEH'

حضرة الانسة سامية جبران بخعازي
المحترمة

اهنئك على جهدك واجتهادك وارجوان
تثقي تمام الثقة بان النظام البرلماني موضوع اطروحتك
هو الافضل لبلدنا لبنان ، وهذا النظام قابل
للتحسين ، كما قلت لك في حديثنا ، على غرار كل
ما هو بشري ، سوى ان تحسینه يقيم في نظري
على اخلاق ممارسيه اكثر مما قد يناله من تعديل
وتبديل في البنود . فالنص حرف جامد اذا لم
ترافقه روح حية في سلامة التطبيق .
وتفضلي بقبول تحياتي الخالصة

بالحية التي
سأه
كوري

الكسليك في ٢٢ اذار ١٩٦١

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Bikhezi

ABSTRACT

To my knowledge, this is the first study of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies written in English. Studies on this subject were made in Arabic by Messrs. Hassan al-Hassan, Constitutional Law and the Lebanese Constitution; Anwar al-Khateeb, Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries; Sobhi Mahmassani, Constitution and Democracy; Abdo Oweidat, Constitutional System in Lebanon, the Arab Countries and the World. These studies were a great help to my work. However, my field of study is limited to the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies. The object of this thesis is to study the Parliamentary System of Lebanon, in letter and practice, as well as to point out the weaknesses and to suggest some reforms.

The main difficulty in writing this study was that most of the material was taken from either Arabic or French sources. The only translated literature in English is the Lebanese Constitution itself. The difficulty in translation lay in finding the correct technical terminologies.

This study consist of an introduction discussing the development of Parliamentary life in Lebanon under the French mandate, from 1920 to 1946. Most of the research for the introduction were taken from the Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, 1920-1943, the Lebanese Official Journal, 1926-1943, and other secondary sources.

Chapters two, three and four and five discuss successively the rights, duties and privileges of the Deputies as well as the organization,

procedure, and functions of the Chamber of Deputies. The basic source material for these chapters was taken from the Lebanese Constitution of May 23, 1926, with all its amendments, the Internal Law of Procedure of September 1, 1953, with its amendment of August 22, 1957, some of the Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies between 1927, 1960, and the Electoral Law of April 27, 1960.

Chapter six is a criticism of the letter of the Constitution, the Internal Law of Procedure and the Electoral Law in the light of my study of these three documents and research references.

The conclusion is a collection of impressions of eleven well known political figures in Lebanon whom I interviewed regarding their opinions on the practice of the Parliamentary system in Lebanon and their suggestions towards improving this system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to extend my thanks and gratitude to the following politicians I have interviewed, for the great interest they have expressed in my work and their eagerness to help.

Three former Presidents of the Lebanese Republic; Messrs. Alfred Nackash, Bechara al-Khoury, a former President and the Leader of the Dusturien Bloc; Camille Chamoun, a former President and the leader of the National Liberal Party.

The Deputies interviewed were: Messrs. Fuad Butros, a leading figure in the Independent Bloc; Maurice Gemayel, a leading member of the Kataeb Party; Kamal Jumblat, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party; Adnan al-Hakim, leader of the Najadeh Party; and Raymond Edde, leader of the National Bloc.

I also interviewed Dr. Abdallah Sa'ade, President of the banned Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and two former Deputies, Mr. Abdallah al-Yafi, who was also a Prime Minister at one time, and Mr. Ghassan Twaini, editor of al-Nahar newspaper.

I specially wish to thank Mr. Anwar al-Khateeb, who was kind enough to let me use his book Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries, while it was still under print. I also thank my advisor Dr. Shavarsh Toriguian. Finally I would like to thank my father for all his support.

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INTRODUCTION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM IN LEBANON UNDER THE FRENCH MANDATE

In 1920, Lebanon came under the French mandate, which was given recognition at the San Remo Conference.¹ This new set up was in accordance with article 22 (paragraph 4) of the Covenant of the League of Nations: "Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance of a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone."² There was no specific statement as to which territories this paragraph applied, however, territories were specified a year later in article 94 of the Treaty of Sevres.³ The terms of the mandate included the framing of a constitution for these territories within a period of three years with the exception of Palestine.⁴

On September 1, 1920, General Gouraud proclaimed the independence

¹ Great Britain, Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Sevres, August 10, 1920, Treaty Series No. 11, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920), p. 26.

² League of Nations, Official Journal, The Covenant of the League of Nations, (Vol. I, No. 1, February, 1920) (London, 1920), p. 9.

³ Great Britain, Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Sevres, August 10, 1920, Treaty Series No. 11, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920), p. 26.

⁴ League of Nations, Secretariat, Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon (C. 528, M. 313, VI) (Geneva, August 12, 1922), p. 1.

of Greater Lebanon. In addition to the old boundaries of Mount Lebanon, the State of Greater Lebanon came to include the caza of Baalbek, the Bekaa, Rachayaa, and Hasbaya; the Sandjak of Saida, excluding the part given to Palestine; the Sandjak of Beirut; the caza of Tripoli; part of the caza of Akkar which is situated on Nahr-el-Kabir, and a part of the caza of Hosn el-Akrad.¹ The same day, September 1, 1920, the State of Greater Lebanon was divided into four sandjaks, North Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon and Bekaa, with two autonomus municipalities, Beirut and Tripoli. The four sandjaks consisted of twelve caza which were divided into mudiriyyat.²

This increase in territory caused a considerable change in the confessional distribution of the population. In Beirut, the population was half Christian and half Muslim; Tripoli had an overwhelming Muslim majority. The Shiites were the predominant sect in the South, while the Sunnis and Shiites were double the number of Christians in the Bekaa. Thus, no area in the new state of Great Lebanon had a uniform population. The Maronites formed the largest community, next came the Sunni Muslims, the Greek Orthodox, the Shiites and the Druzes.³

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 318, August 31, 1920, pp. 132-135.

² France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 336, September 1, 1920, pp. 141-150.

³ S.H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1958), pp. 123-147.
Z.N. Zeine, The Struggle for Independence, (Beirut: Khayat's, 1960), pp. 151-167.

Executive power was vested in a French Governor responsible to the High Commissioner for order, security and the general administration of the state. The Governor was to set up the budget, to prepare all plans concerning the duties, taxes and monopolies pertaining to the state, the sandjaks and the municipalites and to submit them to the High Commissioner. The Governor had the power to appoint functionaries of all orders and ranks, except those whose positions were reserved for approval by the High Commissioner.

After the office of the Governor came the office of General Services; Finance, Interior, Public Information, Justice, Public Works, Agriculture, Public Aid, Post and Telegram. These services were directly responsible to the Governor, each was headed by a high official whose appointment was subject to the approval of the High Commissioner. These officials were assisted by several French technical advisors appointed by the High Commissioner with the approval and modification of the Governor.¹

Attached to the central power thus formed, was a Council of fifteen members appointed by the High Commissioner on the proposal of the Governor. This Council was called the Administrative Council of Greater Lebanon. Its powers were mainly consultative in nature, on matters pertaining to legislation, allocation of the state budget, and on the creation of new duties, taxes and monopolies.²

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 336, September 1, 1920, pp. 141-150.

² France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 336, September 1, 1920, pp. 141-150.

Local administration was confined in each sandjak to a mutasarif appointed by the High Commissioner on the proposal of the Governor. The mutasarif was assisted by a French Advisor and was responsible for the general services of the sandjak. A local administrative commission composed of ten members appointed for a period of one year by the Governor upon the recommendation of the mutasarif, helped the later in his duties.¹

At the head of the caza was a qā'im maqām (district governor) appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the mutasarif and responsible to him. Finally, each mudiriya was administered by a mudir, nominated by the qā'im maqām and responsible to him.²

On March 9, 1922, General Gouraud issued decree No. 1304 creating the first Lebanese Representative Council; this Council was composed of thirty members elected by the universal suffrage on two stages.³ The distribution of the seats was determined by decree No. 1307, March 10, 1922, and seats were distributed proportionally among the different religious sects.⁴ The Representative Council met in two regular sessions each

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrête No. 336, September 1, 1920, pp. 141-150.

² Ibid.

³ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrête No. 1304, March 10, 1922, pp. 178-193.

⁴ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrête No. 1307, March 10, 1922, pp. 195-229.

year. It was assisted by four commissions; Finance, General Administration and Justice, Public Information, Health, Public Aid and Public Works.¹

The duties of the Council included approval of the budget, which was prepared by the Governor with the aid of the Finance Commission. The Council could also vote on new taxes and any increase in custom duties, had a decisive vote in matters of legislative nature, and could pass decrees on matters concerning public works, health and public aid. The Council was also able to state its opinions on matters of economic and administrative nature.²

The State of Greater Lebanon was thus governed by the French High Commissioner and his assistants from the time of its establishment until May 23, 1926, at which date it was transformed into the Lebanese Republic, through the adoption of the Constitution.³

In 1925, the High Commissioner, General Sarrail, sent to Paris a draft containing the basic principles for a Lebanese constitution. A special committee was appointed to study the draft; after a long period of study, the committee decided that it should be the duty of the Lebanese Representative Council to draw up and ratify a constitution. The Mandatory authorities were only to supervise the work of the Council. This

¹ Le Syrie et le Liban Sous l'Occupation et le Mandat Francais, 1919-1927, ed. Berger-Levrault (Imprimerie V. Voltaire-Gap), pp. 40-44.

² Ibid.

³ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (Beirut, May, 1926) (Supplement to No. 1984), pp. 1-6. (and Supplement to No. 1987), p. 4. Official Journal.

decision was delivered to the Council on January 10, 1925, by Mr. De Jouvenel, the High Commissioner at that time. Accordingly, the Representative Council appointed a Committee of Three to assume work on a draft for a Lebanese constitution under the direction of the High Commissioner. A second committee, consisting of twelve members from the Council and of six notables was elected. This committee under the name "Constitutional Committee" decided to hold a plebiscite so as to have the opinion of the different communities on the draft of the Constitution.¹ This plebiscite was not taken seriously; and as a result, the Constitutional Committee finally was forced to approve the draft drawn up by the High Commissioner and his Committee of Three, and accordingly, the Lebanese Constitution was declared on May 23, 1926.²

The Legislative power was vested in two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. (Constitution: article 16). The members of the Senate, sixteen in number would be appointed by the head of the state. Both Chambers met and elected Mr. Charles Debbas as the first President of the Lebanese Republic on May 26, 1926.³ However, on October 17, 1927, article sixteen was amended and the Legislative power was vested in one

¹ B.K. al-Khoury, *Haqa'iq Lubnaniyyah* (in Arabic) (Beirut, 1960), Vol. I, pp. 131-133. Lebanese Truths.

H. al-Hassan, *al-Qanun ad-Dustouri wa-Dustour fi Lubnan* (in Arabic) (Beirut, Dar Maktabat al-Hayat, 1959). pp. 129-130. Constitutional Law and the Constitution in Lebanon.

² *Lebanon al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah* (in Arabic) (Beirut, May, 1926) (Supplement to No. 1984), pp. 1-6. (and Supplement to No. 1987), p. 4. Official Journal.

³ *Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah* (in Arabic) (No. 1979, June 8, 1926), p. 2. Official Journal.

chamber, the Chamber of Deputies.¹ Lebanese elections were held on July 1929; the resulting Chamber of Deputies consisted of 45 members, 30 elected and 15 appointed by the Executive.² Elections were held in accordance with the Electoral Law of March 9, 1922.³

In 1932, there was some conflict over the position of the President of the Republic. Under the guise of ending this conflict, the Mandatory power suspended the Constitution from May 9, 1932 until January 2, 1934.⁴ Meanwhile, the High Commissioner, Mr. Ponsot, dissolved the Chamber of Deputies and the Council of Ministers and passed a special law appointing a Head of State, assisted by a General Director possessing the power that previously belonged to the Council of Ministers.⁵

On January 2, 1934, the High Commissioner passed a decree reinstating the Constitution, except for the provisions relating to the election of the President, and appointed Habib Pasha al-Sa'd President for one year.

¹ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 2116, October 19, 1927), pp. 1-5. Official Journal.

² B.K. al-Khoury, Haqa'iq Lubnaniyah (in Arabic) (Beirut, 1960) Vol. I, p. 165. Lebanese Truths.

³ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 1304, March 9, 1922, pp. 178-193.

⁴ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 2611, Arrete No. 55, May 9, 1932), p. 2. Official Journal.

⁵ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 2611, Arrete No. 55, May 9, 1932), p. 2. Official Journal.

This was later extended to a second year. The President was assisted by a French Vice President, a General Secretary and a council.¹ The Lebanese were also allowed a Chamber of Deputies consisting of 32 members, 25 elected and 7 appointed. The new Chamber of Deputies was elected according to the Electoral Law of 1934,² it met in two regular sessions to study the constitutional draft of the budget. A few months after the election of the new Chamber of Deputies, the High Commissioner suspended partially parts 2, 3 and 4 of the Constitution.³

On January 3, 1936,⁴ the High Commissioner issued decree No. L.R. I, to the effect that the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies shall elect a President for a period of three years; President Emile Edde was elected on January 20, 1936.⁵ All Presidential Decrees needed the countersignature of the General Secretary.⁶

On January 4, 1937, the High Commissioner reinstated the Constitution.⁷

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Recueils des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 2, January 2, 1934, pp. 55-66.

² Ibid.

³ France, Haut Commissariat, Recueils des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 1, January 2, 1934, pp. 50-54.

⁴ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 3247, Arrete No. L.R./1, January 3, 1936), p. 2. Official Journal.

⁵ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Third Session, First Irregular Session, First Meeting, January 20, 1936, pp. 289-292. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

⁶ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 3247, Arrete No. L.R./1, January 3, 1936), p. 2. Official Journal.

⁷ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 3381, Arrete No. 1, January 4, 1937), p. 1. Official Journal.

Constitutional life in Lebanon continued until September 1939, when the President of the French Republic issued a decree stating that all countries under the French Mandate shall become military bases and shall be under martial law due to the state of war between France and Germany.¹ Accordingly, the High Commissioner in Lebanon suspended the Constitution on September 21, 1939 for an unlimited period of time.² On April 9, 1941, the High Commissioner issued a decree providing for the following:

1. Annulling the Presidency and appointing a Head of State.
2. Substituting the General Secretary with a Council of five members appointed by the Head of State.
3. The Council was given the privilege of approving legislation, a power previously belonging to the President of the Republic.³

On June 8, 1941, General Catroux declared the independence of Lebanon from the Cairo broadcasting station.⁴ Nevertheless, Lebanon remained under military rule as a result of war in the Middle East. On March 18, 1943, the High Commissioner reinstated the Constitution,⁵ and article 24,

¹ B.K. al-Khoury, *Haqa'iq Lubnaniyah* (in Arabic) (Beirut, 1960), Vol. I, p. 236. Lebanese Truths.

² France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. L.R./246, September 21, 1939, p. 407.

³ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. L.R./80, April 9, 1941, pp. 162-163.

⁴ M. Takieddine, *Wiladat Istiqlal* (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1953). p. 27. The Birth of an Independence.

⁵ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. F.C. 129, March 18, 1943, pp. 65-67.

was amended to allow the election of all the members of the Chamber of Deputies.¹

On September 5, 1943, a new Chamber of Deputies was elected under the supervision of the Mandatory power. The Chamber of Deputies met on the 21st of the month and elected Mr. Bishara al-Khoury as President of the Lebanese Republic.² On the 25th of the month, the Council of Ministers was formed under the Premiership of Mr. Riad as-Solh.³

During the next meeting, November 8, 1943, the Ministry presented a request to amend those articles of the Constitution that related to the Mandatory power. The Chamber of Deputies approved the cancellation of articles 90 to 94 of the Constitution.⁴ Article one of the Lebanese Constitution declared Lebanon an independent, indivisible, sovereign state.

The last vestige of the Mandate in the Constitution disappeared when article five was amended on December 7, 1943, whereby the Lebanese flag was changed from that of the French flag with a cedar tree in the center to the present flag.⁵

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. F.C. 129, March 18, 1943, pp. 65-67.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Fifth Session, First Irregular Session, First Meeting, September 21, 1943, pp. 5-6. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

³ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Fifth Session, First Irregular Session, Third Meeting, October 7, 1943, pp. 10-26. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

⁴ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 4106, November 8, 1943). p. 11501. Official Journal.

⁵ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 4109, January 7, 1943). p. 11555. Official Journal.

The Constitution was suspended on November 10. The amendment of November 8, 1943 provoked the French authorities; and on the night of November 11, the President of the Republic, his Prime Minister and some of the Ministers and Deputies were held prisoners at Rashaya.¹ Emile Edde took over the control of government affairs in Beirut. Habib Abu-Shahla, Majid Arslan and Sabry Hamadeh formed a provisional government at Bshāmūn.² However, under British-American pressure and the support of the neighbouring Arab countries, General Catroux released the prisoners and Lebanon's independence was officially declared on November 22, 1943.³ Foreign troops, however, remained in the country until December 31, 1946.⁴

The foundation of the independent Republic of Lebanon was laid down in 1943 in accordance with an unwritten agreement between President Bishara al-Khoury and Prime Minister Riad as-Solh.⁵ This agreement came to be known as the National Pact. The Pact declared Lebanon an indepen-

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 264, November 10, 1943, p. 190.

² B.K. al-Khoury, Haqa'iq Lubnaniyah (in Arabic) (Beirut, 1960), Vol. II., pp. 33-58. Lebanese Truths.

³ M. Takieddine, Wiladat Istiqlal (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil Malayine, 1953). pp. 208-218. The Birth of an Independence.

⁴ M. Takieddine, al-Jala' (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar Beirut, 1956), p. 243. The Evacuation.

⁵ B.K. al-Khoury, Haqa'iq Lubnaniyah (in Arabic) (Beirut, 1960) Vol. II, pp. 289-299. Lebanese Truths.

F.I. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1961), pp. 17-27.

dent state willing to co-operate economically, politically, culturally and militarily with the Arab states, acting in harmony with them on the international level, refusing to align itself with any foreign country against any Arab state. In case of disputes between any two Arab states, Lebanon would remain neutral. In return, the Arab states recognized the independence of Lebanon collectively by article 4 of the Alexandria Protocol.¹

In accordance with the spirit of the National Pact and to keep the political balance between the various communities, the four leading positions in the country were designated conventionally in the following manner: the President of the Republic, Maronite; the Prime Minister, Sunni Muslim; the Speaker of the House, Shiite Muslim; the Acting Prime Minister, Greek Orthodox. Accordingly, public offices would also be distributed on confessional basis. Also, under article 95 of the Constitution, the seats would be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of the Council of Ministers, if such measures do not harm the welfare of the state.

The Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary will form the three major organs of the Lebanese government.

The Executive consists of the President of the Republic and the Council of Ministers. The President of the Republic is elected for a period of six years by secret ballot with a two third majority in the Chamber of Deputies and may not be elected twice in succession. (Constitution:

¹ M. Takieddine, al-Jala' (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar Beirut, 1956) p. 55. The Evacuation.

Article 49) He appoints and dismisses the Ministers, and officials to state posts except when the law specifies otherwise. (Constitution: article 53) The President has the power of concluding international treaties not exceeding a year's validity, but he must inform the Chamber of Deputies of such agreements, whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties relating to the expenditures of public funds, commerce, or treaties which cannot be denounced every year, must be approved by the Parliament before they become effective. (Constitution: article 52)

The President also has legislative powers. With the approval of the Ministers, the President can put into effect any bill which the Council of Ministers considers urgent, if the Chamber of Deputies fails to reach a decision within forty days. (Constitution: article 58) He promulgates laws which have been adopted by the Chamber of Deputies. (Constitution: article 56) The President has the veto power, in the sense that he has the right to request the re-consideration of a law once during the period of one month which is set for its promulgation. When the President executes this right, he shall not be required to promulgate this law until it has been re-considered and approved by an absolute majority of the Chamber. (Constitution: article 57) The President can adjourn the meetings of the Chamber of Deputies for a period not exceeding one month in one session. (Constitution: article 59) He can summon the Chamber of Deputies for extraordinary sessions; in such case, the decree calling for the session will have to fix the agenda and the duration of

the session. (Constitution: article 33) The last power of the President is that of dissolving the Chamber of Deputies; this needs the approval of the Council of Ministers, (Constitution: article 55)

The second branch of the Executive is the Council of Ministers which is appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic. (Constitution: article 53) Ministers may or may not be members of the Chamber of Deputies. (Constitution: article 28) Decisions made by the President must be countersigned by the Minister or Ministers concerned. (Constitution: article 54) Ministers are both collectively and individually responsible to the Chamber of Deputies. (Constitution: article 66) Equitable confessional representation must be insured in the Council of Ministers.

The Judiciary is the next important organ of the Lebanese government. However, an examination of this organ is not relevant to the subject under study.

The third important organ that constitutes the Lebanese government is the Chamber of Deputies or Legislature, which is unicameral and consists of the Chamber of Deputies. The composition of the Chamber of Deputies is determined by the different religious sects, not by party or individual victories. Before each election, an electoral law specifies the number of Deputies, divides the country into electoral districts, and designates the number of Deputies according to the confessional distribution of the population in each district.

This is a brief survey of the development of Lebanese political life. The following pages will discuss the Electoral System, and the Organization, Procedure and Functions of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN LEBANON

For the maintenance of an orderly society, democratic countries created a representative body to initiate and control the policy of the government on behalf of the people. This is the only way through which people can be directly associated with, and informed about the works of their governments. The Electoral Law is the machinery which helps people elect and choose their representatives.¹

Article 24 of the Lebanese Constitution provides that the number and method of electing Deputies shall be determined by the electoral law in effect. The first elections under the Lebanese Constitution of 1926, were in accordance with the decree of March 9, 1922 made by the High Commissioner.² Elections were held in two stages; the people would first elect the representatives, who in turn would elect the Deputies. The Muhafazat was the basis of the electoral district.³ This continued to be the practice until January 2, 1943, when the High Commissioner decreed that the elections take place in one stage instead of two. The

¹ J.F.S. Ross, Elections and Electors, (London: Eyre and Spothiswoode, 1955), pp. 21-53.

² France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 1304, March 9, 1922, pp. 178-193.

³ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 1307, March 10, 1922, pp. 195-229.

Muhafazat continued to be the electoral district.¹ The Electoral Law was again amended on July 21, 1943.² After the independence of Lebanon, the electoral law was changed several times; in 1950, the Muhafazat continued to be the basis of the electoral district except in Bekka and Northern Lebanon. These two Muhafazat were each divided into two electoral districts.³ This law was amended on November 4,⁴ and November 12, 1952.⁵ It was again amended on April 14, 1953, when the country was divided into 33 electoral districts.⁶ The last Electoral Law, that of April 27, 1960⁷ will be discussed fully on the coming pages. The following points will be covered.

¹ France, Haut Commissariat, Receuil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat en Syrie et au Liban, Arrete No. 2, January 2, 1934, pp. 55-66.

² Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 4093, Arrete No. 312, July 21, 1943). pp. 11327-11328. Official Journal.

³ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 33, August 10, 1950). pp. 523-533. Official Journal.

⁴ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 33, Decree No. 6, November 4, 1952). pp. 927-934. Official Journal.

⁵ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 46, Decree No. 7, November 12, 1952). pp. 942-957. Official Journal.

⁶ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 16, Decree No. 87, April 14, 1953). pp. 1032-1034. Official Journal.

⁷ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 18, April 27, 1960). pp. 307-326. Official Journal.

1. Qualifications of the electors should have.
2. Qualifications of the candidate should have.
3. Number of Deputies and electoral districts.
4. Secret Chamber.
5. Electoral Ticket.

All Lebanese above the age of 21, who enjoy all their civil and political rights as defined by the Electoral Law of 1960, have the right to vote provided they had been living in the constituency for at least six months (article 9) and have their names on the electoral list. (article 48) Those who are deprived of their civil rights, forbidden to hold public offices, charged with felony or crime, or are under legal custody or bankruptcy, are dropped from the electoral list. (article 10)

The qualifications for candidates are specified by articles 6, 28, 29, and 30 of the Electoral Law. Members of the armed forces cannot vote while on duty. Similarly such people cannot run for elections unless if they have resigned from their offices six months prior to the elections. An individual occupying a salaried public position or a religious post paid by the government may not run for election unless he resigns six months prior to the date of the elections; this applied to judges, councils of state, directors-general, inspectors-general, and inspectors. A candidate must have acquired Lebanese citizenship for at least ten years; his name must also be on the electoral list, and he should be at least 25 years of age, enjoying full political and civil rights.¹

¹ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 18, April 27, 1960). pp. 307-326. Official Journal.

The Chamber of Deputies consists of 99 members from 26 electoral districts, elected for a term of four years. The deposit for the candidacy is L.L. 3000, which the candidate loses if he does not secure 25% of the votes.

Articles three and four of the Electoral Law provide that the elections be general and secret. Votes are enclosed in sealed envelopes, stamped by the Ministry of Interior. The elector enters a secret chamber, writes the names of his candidates on the ballot and places it in the envelope provided, seals it, and inserts it in the ballot box. (articles 46-47) Article 49 adds that no elector may cast his vote unless he has taken an electoral ticket, containing his picture and preliminary information concerning his name, sect, and date of birth. This ticket replaces the identity card. It is believed that it ensures a better method of representation; nevertheless, it was not used in the last election. During the month of February, 1962, announcements in various newspapers were made requesting the Lebanese voters to apply for an electoral ticket.

These are the main provisions of the Electoral Law of April 27, 1960; an attempt will now be made to point out from a practical point of view the main weaknesses in the Lebanese Electoral System.

The list system is one of the characteristics left by the French. In a country such as Lebanon, where political parties are poorly organized, the list system leads to the success of one or the other of the traditional political figures and their friends. The list system is not an efficient method of representation for several reasons. Certain persons are elected

merely because their names are placed on the same list as that of a popular leader; later in the Chamber of Deputies these individuals may feel that they are under obligation to the head of the list. They take his side in most political disputes, thus forming a bloc in the Chamber of Deputies which is not based on common political principles but on personal interests. These individuals follow the lead of the head of the list so that their names will again be included on the list in the next elections.

Another shortcoming of the list system lies in the fact that elections in Lebanon are underlined by a competition for the three major offices of the country. (Presidency, Premiership, and Speaker of the Parliament) This factor may have the effect of excluding very capable and fit persons from the Parliament. A traditional leader can make it impossible for a competitor¹ to become a member either by refusing to take him on his list or by fighting him through the "election keys".²

Another fault of the electoral system, which is mainly caused by the absence of political parties, is the lack of organized political platforms. Electioneering campaigns are based on newspaper publicity, public and private meetings, personal visits by the candidates, and the

¹ M.H. Kerr, "The Lebanese Parliamentary Elections", Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. XI, (1960), pp. 367-381.

N.A. Ziadeh, "The Lebanese Elections, 1960", The Middle East Journal, Vol. XIV, No. 4, (1960), pp. 367-381.
"Election Keys" groups or individuals that influence the trend to elections towards one or other of the candidates.

² N.A. Ziadeh, "The Lebanese Elections, 1960", The Middle East Journal, Vol. XIV, No. 4, (1960), pp. 367-381.

election keys. These methods of campaigning tend to endanger peace and friendly relations between citizens as a result of the personal feelings which enter into the picture. The amount of money which the candidates pay may expand to an unlimited figure, and as a result there is a danger that the candidates, who undertake all these expenses, may attempt to regain this sum plus interest once they have become members of the Chamber of Deputies.¹

Concerning the number of Deputies, there are two points open to criticism, first the number itself and second the multiple. The present Chamber of Deputies consists of 99 members. This itself is a great handicap to the working of the Chamber, because such large a number in a country where there are no organized political parties causes undue disturbance, diversions and delays in the works of the Chamber. Each Deputy has his own opinions and demands. His interests are influenced by the needs of his electors, and the deputy must satisfy these needs whether they are individual or collective in order to guarantee his re-election, regardless of national welfare; whereas, a deputy running on a party ticket will have a set program to follow. He would have been elected on his platform, not because he belonged to certain feudal family or because he was placed on the list of a traditional politician. It is true, that some blocs are formed within the Chamber of Deputies; however, they have no binding principles bringing them together and are the result of a temporary need.

¹ N.A. Ziadeh, "The Lebanese Elections, 1960", The Middle East Journal, Vol. XIV, No. 4, (1960), pp. 367-381.

The second defect is not in the number but in the multiple; regardless of the number of Deputies, it must always be a multiple of eleven; the reason for this is to divide the Chamber of Deputies into the ratio of six Christians to five Muslims. This principle contradicts article 27 of the Constitution. This article states that a Deputy, once elected, represents the nation as a whole with no specific obligations for his electors' interests. With confessionalism as the basis for distributing seats in the Chamber of Deputies, it is often difficult for a Deputy to remember that he represents his country as a whole, when in the first place he was elected because he belonged to a certain sect. Only through political parties and not the list system can a Deputy be freed from his obligations towards his electors and his community and can be made to feel that he is representing his country as a whole.

The questions here are, would political parties in Lebanon solve the problem of confessionalism, and would the Lebanese accept proportional representation? These, undoubtedly, are very serious questions; political parties could immediately replace the traditional political figures, could nullify the list system, and could also help organize the entire electoral process. However, eliminating confessionalism is a gradual process. This process will be discussed in the conclusion.

The method of preparing the electoral laws may also be criticized, and some changes should be made. Electoral Laws are prepared by the Chamber of Deputies. In a country like Lebanon where the individual, feudal and confessional factors play a great role, it would be more

desirable to appoint a special committee outside the Chamber of Deputies, preferably those with a law degree who are well informed about the organization of the different districts. This draft could then be placed before the Chamber of Deputies. The Deputies would undoubtedly try to hinder such an arrangement but may gradually come to accept it.

The final criticism of the electoral law is that it states that a member of the Chamber of Deputies must be educated, but it neglects to mention any minimum standard of education. This short sightedness must be considered. The Chamber of Deputies is the Legislative body, and Deputies must have a respectable level of education in order to be able to understand and exercise efficiently their legislative duties. This does not mean that all Deputies must be professional people; however, a high educational background is necessary and desirable for such responsibilities.

CHAPTER TWO

RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF THE DEPUTIES

The Legislative body in Lebanon consists of one chamber, the Chamber of Deputies. According to the Electoral Law of 1960,¹ members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected in one election by universal suffrage. There are 99 Deputies, and they serve a four year term.

A Deputy must be oriented with several principles once he becomes a member of the Chamber of Deputies. These principles specify his rights, duties, and privileges and are defined by the Constitution and the Internal Law of Procedure.

The Internal Law of Procedure

The Internal Law of Procedure² is the decision or set of rules which regulate the work of the Chamber of Deputies. Article 43 of the Lebanese Constitution states that; "The Chamber of Deputies shall draw up its own internal rules of procedure."

The Internal Law of Procedure is not considered a law because it does not need to be promulgated by a Presidential Decree. It is a decision made by the Chamber of Deputies alone. The Internal Law in

¹ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 18, April 27, 1960). pp. 307-326. Official Journal.

² Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 39, September 16, 1953). pp. 1340-1359. Official Journal.

practice consists of 118 articles. These articles are of two kinds:

1. Articles concerned with the works of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament Office, and the Committees.

2. Articles of a Constitutional nature. These are: article 15; defining the legality of a Deputy's membership; article 17, concerning his resignation from office, and the right to propose legislation; article 41; preventing Ministers from being members of the Parliamentary Office; article 35; article 50, designating the quorum in a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies; articles 51-53, dealing with Parliamentary sessions; articles 68-77, related to Parliamentary Investigation and Ministerial Responsibility; article 67, approving of the minutes of previous meetings before sending laws to the Executive for promulgation; articles 95-105, concerning the studying and approval of the budget; article 106, dealing with amending the Constitution.

Official Membership

Deputies are officially recognized as such immediately after the declaration of election results. However, a Deputy's membership is not considered final until the Committee of Verifications checks the credentials of the elected members. Their membership ceases only in accordance with a special law. (Internal Law: article 15) A point worth noting is present in this respect. Since 1953, elections in Lebanon have not been held on the same day. A special Sunday was set for one or more of the Muhafazat, whereby elections were held. Article 15 of the Internal Law was overlooked. This article states that a Deputy is officially

recognized as such immediately after declaring the results of the elections. Here an objection can be raised regarding the length of the mandate of Deputies. Since all mandates do not begin on the same day, should the mandates all end at the same time?

The Committee of Verifications is elected during the first meeting following the election of the Parliamentary Officers. This Committee consists of five members. Its duty is to study all complaints received concerning the validity of elections, to investigate if members have met the requirements for election, to determine if electors received the majority of the votes, and to determine if the elections in general were free. Within fifteen days of its election, the Committee must submit a report of its findings to the Chamber of Deputies. (Internal Law: article 16) It is then up to the Deputies to make the final decision on the validity or non-validity of a mandate; such a decision requires a two-third majority vote. (Constitution: article 30) No Mandate has ever been invalidated in Lebanon, although such recommendations have been advanced several times by the Committee of Verification; accordingly, the question arises, should the Chamber of Deputies continue to elect the Committee of Verification from its members or should the duty be given to the courts. No agreement has been reached so far on this question.¹ Article 30 of the Constitution still gives the power of decision on the

¹ A. al-Khateeb, *al-Usul al-Parlemaniyyah fi Lubnan wa sa'ir al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah*, (in Arabic) (Beirut: dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961). pp. 105-117. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

validity of a mandate to this Committee.

Duties and Privileges

A Deputy cannot absent himself from meetings except with a leave of absence granted by a resolution from the Chamber. The leave may not exceed six months at a time nor more than one year at separate times. In special cases, the Speaker may grant a Deputy a leave of one month; the Chamber of Deputies must be informed of this when it meets. (Internal Law; article 107)

Ten successive absences without a formal leave result in reducing the salary of the Deputy in question, publishing the fact of absence in the Official Journal, and informing the Deputy's district of his continued absence. (Internal Law; article 108)

Y The Electoral Law prohibits a Deputy from holding any military, religious or public office which is paid by the government. Candidates must resign from such offices before running for election. The Constitution, however, allows a Deputy to occupy a ministerial position, (Constitution; article 28) in fact, it is a common practice in Lebanon that ministers are chosen from the Chamber of Deputies.

In accordance with the principle of Parliamentary Immunity, article 39 of the Constitution states that; "No member of the Chamber of Deputies may be prosecuted because of ideas and opinions expressed during the period of his mandate." Article 40 of the Constitution states that; "No member of the Chamber may, during the sessions, be prosecuted or arrested for a criminal offense without the permission of the Chamber,

except when caught in the act." There is no article in the Constitution that specifies to whom the request to remove immunity must be directed, nor does the article explain the procedure to be followed afterwards. However, the request to remove immunity is usually directed to the Speaker, who in turn puts it before the Chamber of Deputies for discussion. The request must come from the Court; and if it is made by individuals, a case must have been placed before the Court. Then the request to remove immunity can be made through the Court. Usually when a request is put before the Chamber of Deputies to remove the immunity of one of its members, this request is placed before a special committee to study and report on it. Later the report is placed before the Chamber of Deputies for a vote. The Chamber of Deputies does not discuss or vote on the criminal offense directed against the Deputy. It only discusses and votes on the question of immunity. A Deputy against whom offense is directed is given a chance to justify points raised against him. The Chamber of Deputies has to vote on this request.¹

¹ A. al-Khateeb, al-Usul al-Parlemanayah fi Lubnan wa^{sa'ir} al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah, (in Arabic) (Beirut: dar el-ilm lil-Malayine, 1961). pp. 453-463. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZATION

Following the official declaration of the result of elections, the President of the Republic and the Council of Ministers promulgate a decree calling the Chamber of Deputies for an irregular session. The purpose of this session is to elect the members of the Parliamentary Office. At the first meeting, the temporary Parliamentary Office consists of the Speaker, the senior member in the Chamber of Deputies, and two secretaries, junior members of the Chamber. The Parliament Office is changed after new elections and at the beginning of each October session. (Internal Law: article 1) Clerical duties of the Chamber of Deputies are carried out by the Diwan, which is composed of personnel from outside the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies has eight committees, composed of members from the Chamber.

The Parliamentary Office

The Parliament Office is the body which organizes and directs the work of the legislature. The Office is also the Chamber's representative in all official matters. The Officers of the Chamber are: the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, two secretaries, and three other members. (Internal Law: article 2) The procedure for electing these officers is as follows: the Speaker is elected first by the absolute majority of those present at the first meeting of the Chamber of Deputies. If such a majority cannot

be attained, the elections are repeated this time requiring only a simple majority. The Deputy Speaker is elected in the same manner; then follows the election of the two secretaries. (Internal Law; article 3) In this respect the Internal Law contradicts the Constitution. Article 44 of the Constitution declares that the two secretaries should be elected separately, while article three of the Internal Law states that the two secretaries be elected in one ballot. The election of the secretaries is followed by that of the three officers, all requiring a simple majority for their election. (Internal Law: article 3)

The Speaker is responsible for conducting the meetings of the Chamber of Deputies, directing debate, keeping order within the Chamber, applying Internal Law, guarding the Constitution, observing the activities of various committees, and attending meetings in which two or more committees take part. (Internal Law: articles 6 and 55) The Speaker also has the full liberty to grant or refuse permission for a member to speakⁱⁿ/the Chamber of Deputies. (Internal Law: article 55)

The Speaker usually does not vote on drafts in order to maintain a neutral position in any debate; however, in case he wishes to take part, he must leave the Chair and take a seat with the other members of the House until the debate is over. (Internal Law: article 56) The Deputy Speaker presides when the Speaker is absent. (Internal Law: article 7)

The two secretaries register the names of members who ask to speak in the Chamber, check the voting papers, and organize the records of the meetings which are then signed by the Speaker or his Deputy. (Internal

Law: article 8)

The Parliamentary Office meets once a week to discuss the orders of the day, raises objections to the minutes of the previous meeting, and as the Petition Committee, the Office receives all drafts from the Speaker and passes them on through their legal channels. (Internal Law: article 10) The Office prepares the agenda for each meeting and sends it to the Chamber of Deputies twenty four hours prior to the meeting; it also organizes the budget for the Chamber of Deputies, as well as the staff list for the year. (Internal Law: article 10)

The Parliamentary Office is assisted by a secretary-general and other assistants who are non-members. Three of these assistants are appointed by the Speaker to register the minutes of the meeting and to organize the records. The senior assistant signs his name along with those of the Speaker, or the Deputy Speaker and one of the secretaries. The records must be organized and signed within a period of fifteen days after the meeting. In case of delay, the officers are fined L.L. 50 which is doubled in case of further delay. (Internal Law: articles 13 and 14)

The Diwan

✓ The Diwan consists of a general-director, a ~~head~~ and several minor officers. (Internal Law: article 11) The director and chairman must hold a law degree, while the other officers need a baccalauriat. (Internal Law: article 12) The Diwan consists of the following departments:

1. The Department of General Directory
2. The Diwan
3. The Committees' Department
4. The Records' Department

The personnel of the Diwan are the following:

1. One Director-General
2. Six administrative directors
3. Eight reporters
4. Nineteen policemen
5. Two observers and a number of office boys.

The Director-General is the head of all personnel; he assists the Speaker and has the following powers:

1. The signing of documents of non-legislative nature.
2. The signing of travel permits within the Lebanese territory.
3. The signing of approval for expenditures not exceeding L.L. 1000.
4. The approving of salaries of personnel and of small expenditures.¹

The functions of the Diwan are the following:

1. Receiving and distributing mail among different departments.
2. Printing drafts, sending them to their respective committees, and placing them before the Parliament for discussion.

¹ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 14, qarar No. 66, March 19, 1953). pp. 863-866. Official Journal.

3. Organizing the personnel files.
4. Placing before the Speaker all papers which require his signature.
5. Organizing the Parliament Library.
6. Preparing the budget of the Parliament.

The Committees' Department has the following functions:

1. Receiving all letters and drafts referred to the various committees.
2. Assigning meetings for the committees.
3. Recording the minutes and decisions of meetings.
4. Preparing these decisions and drafts for referral to the Diwan.
5. Filing all important papers.

The Records' Committee is concerned with the following matters:

1. Recording the minutes of the meetings.
2. Organizing reports of previous meetings.
3. Correcting and printing the records.¹

The Committees of the Chamber of Deputies

Detailed work is not done in the general meetings of the Chamber of Deputies, as decisions cannot be taken without first studying the subject in question and debating it with reference to different sources. These studies are made by the committees which are necessary for the preliminary stages of legislation.

¹ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 14, qarar No. 66, March 19, 1953). pp. 863-866. Official Journal.

There are eight Committees within the Chamber of Deputies, each related to a Ministry and concerned with its respective problems. (Internal Law: article 18, with the amendment of August 24, 1957)¹

1. The Committee of Budget and Finance, representing the Ministry of Finance and consisting of eleven members.

2. The Committee of Justice, representing the Ministries of Interior and Justice and consisting of nine members.

3. The Committee of Public Affairs, Post and Telegram, representing the Ministry of Public Affairs, Post and Telegram, and consisting of nine members.

4. The Committee of Public Health and Social Affairs, representing the Ministries of Public Health and Social Affairs, and consisting of nine members.

5. The Committee of Agriculture, National Economy and Tourism, representing the Ministries of Agriculture and National Economy, and consisting of seven members.

6. The Committee of Foreign Affairs and National Defense, representing the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense and consisting of seven members.

7. The Committee of Education and Fine Arts, representing the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, and consisting of seven members.

8. The Committee of Internal Law, consisting of five members.

These Committees are elected once a year at the beginning of the March session and upon the election of a new Chamber of Deputies.

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, First Irregular Session, First Meeting, August 24, 1957. pp. 23-24. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

(Internal Law: article 18)

The Chamber of Deputies may appoint special committees to study special subjects; these special committees are elected in the same manner as the permanent committees. (Internal Law: article 18)

Immediately after the election of committees, the Speaker asks them to meet separately to elect a chairman and a reporter. (Internal Law: article 19) Each Deputy must be a member of at least one and not more than two committees. (Internal Law: article 20) with the exception of the Committee of Internal Law. Article 20 fails to explain the reason for this exception. My interpretation is that a member of this Committee can successfully belong to one or two other committees, as the Committee of Internal Law has only occasional duties. It is forbidden to be a Minister and a member of a committee at the same time. (Internal Law: article 35)

Article 31 of the Internal Law states that; the Speaker appoints one or more secretaries to each committee from the personnel of the Diwan. The secretary must have a law degree. His duty is to accurately record the minutes of the committee meetings.

A committee may appoint a sub-committee for a more detailed study of a particular subject. Each sub-committee is responsible only to the Committee which has appointed it. (Internal Law: article 21)

All drafts, suggestions, or petitions are submitted to the Speaker, who in turn refers them to their respective committees. Then, the committee studies the point in question and submits a report to Parliament through the Speaker. (Internal Law: article 22)

Meetings of a committee are held upon the request of the committee's chairman or reporter in the presence of the responsible Minister. (Internal Law: article 23) The subject of discussion must be stated in the note informing of the meeting. (Internal Law: article 24)

A quorum for the first meeting of a committee requires the attendance of at least half the members. If a quorum is not obtained at the first meeting, any number will be sufficient at the next meeting. If a member fails to attend three successive meetings without a legal excuse, the committee considers him as having resigned; and the Chamber of Deputies is asked to elect another member in his place. (Internal Law: article 26) During its session the Chamber of Deputies designates one day each week for committee meetings; the Chamber of Deputies does not meet that day. (Internal Law: article 25)

If a committee needs any documents which are kept in the official departments of the government, they may be requested through the Speaker; in which case, no report needs to be presented until the committee has access to the required documents. (Internal Law: article 27)

Committee meetings are secret. Absolute majority is needed for any decision to be taken; in case of ties, the issue fails. (Internal Law: article 29) Reports on decisions must be received by committee members three days prior to the Parliament meeting. A committee report must be submitted within one month from the day an issue is received. If a delay is necessary, the chairman may request an extension from the Chamber of Deputies. (Internal Law: article 30)

In case of urgent matters, the committee is informed about the subject of the meeting twenty four hours before the appointed meeting time; and in this case, the report is due within a week. In case of delay, the Chamber may either postpone or refer the subject for discussion by the Deputies without waiting for the committee report.

(Internal Law: article 30) A committee's report must include the opinions expressed by every member. (Internal Law: article 30) This contradicts with article 29 of the Internal Law which states that all committee meetings are secret. Similarly, article 35 of the Constitution is in contradiction with article 29 of the Internal Law. Article 35 of the Constitution states that; "The sittings of the Chamber shall be public. However at the request of the Government or five Deputies, the Chamber may sit in secret sessions." Similarly Article 28 of the Internal/^{Law}states that a Deputy is entitled to attend the meetings of any committee, even if he is a non-member; but he has no right to take part in the discussion. As a result, committee meetings cannot be kept secret, unless the meetings of the Chamber of Deputies are also kept secret.

Minutes of committee meetings must have the signature of the committee's chairman along with the signature of the secretary. (Internal Law: article 31)

Every committee may have a representative on the Committee of Budget and Finance; however, these representatives have only an advisory power. (Internal Law: article 33) There is no article which mentions whether

such representatives will be prevented from belonging to more than one committee if they are representatives on the Committee of Budget and Finance. My assumption is that, since they are not allowed to vote in this Committee, they are not actual members; this then does not prevent them from belonging to two other committees.

The Committee of Internal Law is responsible for the legal interpretations of the Internal Law and for considering the amending or interpreting of any of its articles. (Internal Law: article 34)

No voting can take place regarding the foreign policy of the country without referring it first to the committee of Foreign Affairs. (Internal Law: article 81)

When new committees are elected, the previous committees will refer to them all papers under study. (Internal Law: article 36) Here one could criticize the efficiency of the system. Is it possible for the committees to give efficient and precise attention when their members are frequently changing? There is no doubt that individuals have different opinions and solutions for matters in question. Often the time of the committee expires before submitting a report, and the change in committee members would undoubtedly cause considerable delay. It is advisable that members of committees change only with the coming into existence of a new Chamber.

Excluding urgent issues, papers are studied by committees in the order of their receipt. (Internal Law: article 37)

CHAPTER FOUR

PROCEDURE IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Regular and Irregular Sessions

The first meeting of a new Chamber of Deputies and the first meeting of the October sessions are set aside for the election of the Parliamentary Office. (Internal Law: article 1)

There are two regular sessions; the first opens on the first Tuesday after the 15th of March and closes at the end of May. The second, which is devoted to discussing and voting on the budget, opens the first Tuesday after the 15th of October and closes at the end of the calendar year. (Internal Law: article 51) Irregular sessions are called for by a Presidential Decree, containing the date and business of the meetings, or upon the request of the majority of the Deputies. (Internal Law: article 52) There is only one case in which the Chamber of Deputies may meet outside a regular session without being called by the President of the Republic. This occurs when the President fails to summon the Chamber of Deputies to meet to elect a new President, at least two months prior to the expiration of his term. In this case, the Chamber of Deputies meets without a summon on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the Presidential term. (Constitution: article 73)

Meetings of the Chamber of Deputies are usually open to the public. Secret meetings may be held upon the request of the Council of Ministers or of ten Deputies. (Internal Law: article 66) Article 35 of the

Constitution provides that such meetings may be called upon the request of five members.

Voting

A meeting of the Chamber of Deputies cannot be held unless a majority of the total members are present; (Internal Law: article 50) Article 34 of the Constitution states that decisions must be made by a majority vote; however, should the vote be a tie, the question under consideration is rejected. Neither the Constitution nor the Internal Law state the type of majority needed, that is whether it is a majority of all members or only of those present. The current practice is to require a majority of only the members present. Here is a point worth noting; voting under such circumstances, the Chamber of Deputies does not abide by the democratic principles. Often, the majority who vote may not represent a majority of Deputies.

Article 36 of the Constitution states that; "votes shall be cast verbally or by the members rising and sitting, except in case of election when the ballot shall be secret. With respect to laws in general and questions of confidence, the vote shall always be taken by roll-call and in an audible voice." This article indicates four methods of voting:

1. Raising hands
2. Standing and sitting
3. Roll-call
4. Secret ballot

The Parliamentary Office is elected by secret ballot. (Internal

Law: article 78 and article 44 of the Constitution) However, votes of confidence are taken openly. A roll call of the members is taken, and each member is to reply with either confidence, no confidence, or abstention. (Internal Law: article 83 of the Constitution) Secret ballot is used upon the request of five or more members. (Internal Law: article 80) Voting on other matters is taken by a show of hands; sometimes, a standing vote is taken to eliminate confusion. (Internal Law: article 79) On the budget and legislative decrees, voting is taken on each article separately either by a show of hands or by a standing vote; then the Chamber of Deputies votes on the matter in question as a whole. (Internal Law: article 80)

Article 45 of the Constitution states that; "Members of the Chamber may only vote when they are present at the meeting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted."

Regular Procedure

The first regular session of the Chamber of Deputies is devoted to the discussion of various draft laws and general subjects. The second regular session is devoted to studying and approving the budget; other subjects may also be discussed in this session. (Internal Law; article 53)

One meeting a week is assigned for questioning and interpellating the Council of Ministers. (Internal Law: article 54) After obtaining a quorum, the meeting is called to order by the Speaker, who requests one of the secretaries to read the names of members who have excused

themselves from attendance. (Internal Law: article 59) The minutes of the previous meeting are read; subsequently, the floor is open to any one who has amendments or additions to the minutes. In case of disagreement on a point relating to the minutes, the Parliamentary Office is the final judge. (Internal Law: article 59) Following the reading and approval of the minutes, the agenda is submitted to the Chamber. Any member is allowed a maximum of five minutes for comments on these items. The total discussion of the subjects is not to exceed more than half an hour. (Internal Law: article 59)

Debate

Priority in debate is first given to the Council of Ministers. Second preference to the committee reporter who presents the views of his respective committee. The right of speaking then is extended to the deputies according to the sequence of their names on the agenda. (Internal Law: article 61) A motion for closing discussion may be considered only after at least three members have spoken in favour and three against the subject. Such a motion is usually written and placed on the desk before the Speaker; members can either accept or refuse the motion. In case of acceptance, a vote upon the subject under discussion is taken; otherwise, discussion continues according to the previously described method. (Internal Law: article 62)

A Deputy may discuss matters related to the Internal Law only once in a single meeting, and he may ask to have the matter referred

to the Committee of Internal Law if the Chamber of Deputies refuses to consider the point under question. (Internal Law: article 64)

Y A Deputy may withdraw or amend a bill which he had previously submitted. (Internal Law: article 64)

Y In debaté, a Deputy may answer a personal affront without formally receiving the floor from the Speaker. (Internal Law: article 63)

Speeches are addressed only to the Speaker or to the Chamber as a whole, and no speeches exceeding five minutes are allowed. (Internal Law: article 65)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

The Functions of the Chamber of Deputies are:

1. Legislation (Constitution article 16) legislation is of two kinds: regular and financial.
2. Controlling the Executive (Constitution: articles 70-72)
3. Amending the Constitution (Constitution: articles 76-79)
4. Electing the President of the Republic (Constitution: articles 49, 73-75)
5. Judicial Functions (Constitution: articles 60, 70, 71 and 80)

Legislation

The formal right to propose legislation in Lebanon is limited to the President of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies as provided by article 18 of the Constitution, while article 41 of the Internal Law states that the President and Council of Ministers as well as the Chamber of Deputies can propose legislation.

If a proposal is made by Deputies, it should be signed by not more than six members. (Internal Law: article 41) If the President of the Republic wishes to put forward a draft legislation, he must submit it first to the Council of Ministers (Constitution: article 54) where it is studied and then presented to the Chamber of Deputies in the form of a

draft law. This draft must be signed by the President and the Minister or Ministers concerned. Similarly, the Council of Ministers may propose drafts for legislation. The Speaker cannot refuse any drafts put forward by the President or the Council of Ministers. At the most, he can return them for reconsideration.

It is sometimes customary for the Chamber of Deputies to request the Council of Ministers to prepare drafts pertaining to a certain matter. This does not contradict the principle of separation of powers, as no draft becomes an act except with the approval of the Chamber of Deputies. Though the power of legislation belongs strictly to the Chamber of Deputies, (Constitution: article 16) it has happened four times in Lebanon that this power had been delegated to the Council of Ministers upon its request. (December 17, 1929;¹ October 15, 1952;² October 18, 1954;³ December 12, 1958.⁴ However, nothing is mentioned either in the Constitution or in the Internal Law about this practice.

Drafts may vary in nature as to regular, urgent or extra urgent forms. The urgent draft must be written in articles, and it should mention the reasons which make it urgent. After a draft is referred

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Second Regular Session, Fifth Meeting, December 17, 1929. pp. 1-15. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 44, October 16, 1952). pp. 838-839. Official Journal.

³ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 43, October 20, 1954). pp. 748-749. Official Journal.

⁴ Lebanon, al-Jarida ar-Rasmiyah (in Arabic) (No. 51, December 13, 1958). p. 691. Official Journal.

to the proper committee, it must be studied before all other subjects; and a report must be given on the findings of the committee within a week. The draft must also be given preference on the agenda of the first meeting of the Chamber of Deputies following the receipt of the report. (Internal Law: article 86) On the other hand, if the request for an urgent proposal is refused, it must go through the regular channels. (Internal Law: article 87)

The Council of Ministers or a Deputy may request that a draft be considered extra-urgent. In this case, the draft must contain only one article. If the Chamber of Deputies accepts the request for the extra urgent form, then the draft is studied by the Chamber of Deputies without being referred to any committee. If the extra urgent form is refused, then the draft is given the urgent form channels. (Internal Law: articles 88 and 89) No urgent or extra urgent forms may be used in matters pertaining to the amending of the Constitution, the Internal Law or the levying of new taxes. (Internal Law: article 90)

The urgent form sometimes has very important consequences on the legislative procedures. Article 58 of the Constitution states that; "By means of a Decree issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Republic may put into effect any bill which has previously been declared to be urgent by the Government in the Decree or transmission issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, and on which the Chamber has not given a decision within forty days following its communication to the Chamber."

REGULAR LEGISLATION

The Speaker refers all petitions and drafts immediately upon receiving them to the proper committee or committees. (Internal Law: article 22) This contradicts article 42 of the Internal Law, which states that the Chamber of Deputies must be informed about the contents of the different petitions and drafts before they are referred to their respective committees.

The practice presently followed is that the Speaker refers proposals and petitions immediately to the committees; and when the committees' reports are ready, the Chamber of Deputies is informed. This practice is followed because it is believed to be more expedient.

Committees study drafts in the order of their receipt; the chairman of the committee or the reporter, in case of the former's inability to attend, calls for the meetings of the committees. The subjects under study must be distributed among members at least three days before the meeting. (Internal Law: articles 23 and 30)

Committee meetings are secret. The quorum for the first meeting is more than half of the members, after which any number is sufficient. (Internal Law: articles 23 and 29)

When a committee meets, the Chairman must invite the responsible Minister to attend the meeting. (Internal Law: article 23) He may attend accompanied by specialists from his Ministry who help him in discussing the technical questions brought forth by the Deputies. He may further send the director general of his Ministry instead of himself.

However, in such a case, the Minister's delegate can only cover the administrative points of the questions, leaving questions of a political nature to the responsible Minister. (Internal Law: article 23) Though the Internal Law provides that the Minister concerned should attend committee meetings, it has become the practice for committees to meet without the presence of the Minister. Work continues and reports are put before the Chamber of Deputies as they are ready.

A Deputy may attend a committee meeting even if he is not a member, in which case his arguments are merely advisory. He cannot participate in voting. (Internal Law: article 28) Mr. Anwar Khateeb in his book on Parliamentary Principles, believes that giving a Deputy only an advisory power is limiting his rights as a Deputy. Mr. Khateeb relates that he was attending a committee meeting in 1959, of which he was not a member, and he suggested that one item of the subject in question be revised. The chairman asked if one of the committee members would like to adopt Mr. Khateeb's suggestion. Mr. Khateeb insisted that he should be allowed to ask for the revision; the chairman granted his request and asked him to point out his objections. Mr. Khateeb could not, however, vote on the points that he recommended for revision because he was not a member of the Committee.¹

The discussion of a draft in a committee meeting follows the same

¹ A. al-Khateeb, al-Usul al-Parlemaniyyah fi Lubnan wa/ al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961). p. 152. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries. sa'ir

procedure as that which is followed by the Chamber of Deputies.¹ The draft is first read, after which the floor is open for debate. Those who have requested permission to speak, will be allowed to do so according to their turn. Members may approve the draft, oppose it or ask for amendments. (Internal Law: articles 45 and 46) If a draft has been submitted to the Council of Ministers for study, the respective Minister will act as a committee reporter, he puts the matter orally before the Chamber for voting, and he answers all questions directed by Deputies on the report. If a draft is submitted by a Deputy and referred to one of the committees for study, the Deputy is asked to attend the committee meetings, and a copy of the draft is referred to the Ministry concerned. The Deputy is allowed to defend his position; at the same time, the committee would acquire the opinion of the Ministry concerned about the issue under study. Sometimes a committee finds it convenient to merge two or more drafts in one and has the full right to do so. (Internal Law: articles 32 and 45)

After ending the debate, the chairman reads the proposed amendments and calls for a vote. If the amendments fail, the original draft is put forward for vote. (Internal Law: article 45) Voting on a draft is taken on every article separately (Internal Law: article 80) and an absolute majority of the members present is needed for an affirmative vote. If an equal vote is obtained then the draft fails. (Internal Law: article 29) In this case the matter is referred to the Chamber of Deputies to have its final word.

Once a committee studies a draft, a report must be submitted to the

¹ A. al-Khateeb, *al-Usul al-Parlemaniyah fir Lebaan Wa Sa'ir al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah* (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961). pp. 141-159. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

Chamber of Deputies. The report should be sent to the Chamber within one month of the date the draft was received by the committee; the committee must submit its report on urgent matters within a week.

(Internal Law: article 30) If the report is not submitted at the appointed time and no request was made by the committee for a time extension,

The Chamber of Deputies can do one of two things, either extend the period for study without the request of the committee or proceed and discuss the draft without waiting for the committee report. (Internal Law: article 30) The committee report is prepared by a secretary appointed by the Speaker from the personnel of the Diwan. The report is signed by the secretary and either the chairman of the committee or the reporter. (Internal Law: article 31)

If a draft is studied by more than one committee, one of two things is acceptable, either to submit a joint report by the committees concerned, or to submit separate reports: (Internal Law: article 32) The report is then submitted to the Chamber of Deputies through the Speaker, who places it on the agenda in the order of its receipt.

Debate over a draft is conducted in the following manner by the Chamber of Deputies. The draft, the reasons for submitting it, and the committee's report are read. To save time, the committee's report is sometimes mimeographed and sent to the deputies before the meeting.

(Internal Law: article 44) After these steps, the committee reporter is given the floor to explain^{orally} the various points which were raised and discussed among the members of the committee. (Internal Law: article 61) Finally, he asks the Chamber of Deputies to approve the report and the

The Speaker then opens the floor for discussion; both the Council of Ministers and the committee reporter have priority if they wish to speak. (Internal Law: article 44) A Deputy has priority to talk on matters relating to the Internal Law or to amending or withdrawing a draft he had placed before the Chamber of Deputies. (Internal Law: article 64) It is then the turn of the rest of Deputies to give their opinions, approval, criticism or suggestions for amending the draft.

Deputies sometimes attempt to delay a decision on a matter under study by bringing up points which were discussed and refused by the committee. To avoid such delay, article 62 of the Internal Law states that a member may submit a written motion to close discussion if at least three members have already favored the report and three have opposed it. If the Chamber of Deputies accepts the motion to close debate, then voting upon the subject must take place; otherwise, the debate continues.

After finishing the general discussion, the draft is discussed article by article. Each article and proposed amendment is read, discussed and voted upon separately. Voting is done by a show of hands, standing, or on the request of five members by secret ballot. After voting on every article a roll call vote is taken on the draft as a whole. Upon the request of ten members, voting on the draft will be made by secret ballot. (Internal Law: article 80)

The Chamber of Deputies may ratify, amend, defeat, or refer again

a draft to the committee or Council of Ministers for reconsideration. (Internal Law: article 46) A draft which the Chamber of Deputies refuses to ratify, cannot be brought back for discussion until six months have passed; if the draft was returned to the Council of Ministers for reconsideration, the Chamber of Deputies will then not discuss it until three months have passed. (Internal Law: article 46) This article is in contradiction with article 38 of the Constitution which states that; "No bill which has been rejected by the Chamber of Deputies may be re-introduced during the same session."

During a regular session, and at the proposal of ten Deputies, the Chamber of Deputies may recommend the revision of certain articles of the Constitution; this recommendation must be made by a two thirds majority of all the deputies. The Speaker refers the recommendation to the President and the Council of Ministers requesting a draft law. If the President and the Council of Ministers approve the recommendation, then they must prepare a draft law within a period of four months; if they do not agree, they return the recommendation to the Chamber of Deputies for reconsideration. If the Chamber of Deputies still insists on the recommendation by a three fourth majority, the President of the Republic may either accept the wishes of the Chamber of Deputies or may issue a decree dissolving the Chamber of Deputies and calling for new elections. If the new Chamber of Deputies also insists on the amendment, the Council of Ministers must submit the draft law to the Chamber of Deputies within a period of four months. (Constitution: article 77)

When the Chamber of Deputies votes upon a draft it is not referred

to the President for promulgation until the minutes of the meeting have been approved by the Chamber of Deputies; however, no law becomes final until it is promulgated by the President of the Republic. The President promulgates these laws within one month of their transmission from the Chamber of Deputies; if the laws have been declared urgent by a special decision of the Chamber of Deputies, then they must be promulgated within five days from the date of their transmission. (Constitution: article 56) The President of the Republic may request the Chamber of Deputies to reconsider a law once during a session; in such a case, the President shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of all the members. (Constitution: articles 51, 56 and 57)

In the next few pages, two case studies will be described to illustrate the points discussed on the legislative process.

Case Study: Extra Urgent Form

Draft No. 13843

The Speaker asked for the reading of draft No. 13843. This draft requests that the Department of National Construction be lent 10,000,000 L.L. Several deputies objected to a discussion of the draft as Mr. Emile Bustani, the chairman of this department and the initiator of the draft, was not present. The Prime Minister attempted to excuse the absence of Mr. Bustani and reminded the Deputies that the Chamber of Deputies had previously approved the Department of National Construction and its finances; consequently, the absence of the chairman should not cause

any delay as the subject was not new to the Chamber of Deputies. The Prime Minister proceeded to say that the Government had once before lent the Department of National Construction the sum of 10,000,000 L.L.; thus, the question of the loan was not without precedent.

A Deputy disapproved the extra urgent form of the draft and suggested that it be referred to the Committee of Budget and Finance in the urgent form. It could then be approved by the Chamber of Deputies at its next meeting. Another deputy suggested through the Speaker that the Chamber of Deputies vote on the request for the extra urgent form. This was not necessary as after hearing several opinions the Prime Minister withdrew the request for the extra urgent form, and the draft was referred to the Committee of Budget and Finance in the urgent form.¹

The meeting was resumed on the following Tuesday, October 30, 1956. The regular procedure was followed in which all letters and petitions which the Chamber of Deputies had received were read. Among these was a telegram from Mr. Emile Bustani insisting that draft No. 13843 must be given the extra urgent form. As Mr. Bustani was present at the meeting, the Speaker asked him to defend his request; he did so and was faced with the opposition of Mr. Joseph Chadir, chairman of the Committee of Budget and Finance. Mr. Chadir stated that his Committee met on the first day after receipt of the draft transmitted to them by the Chamber of Deputies in the urgent form. Mr. Bustani was asked to attend the

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Regular Session, Second Meeting, October 25, 1956, pp. 19-22. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

meeting and to bring with him the monthly reports of the Department of National Construction; Mr. Bustani failed to be present at the meeting.

At this point Mr. Kathem al-Khalil took up the opposition. He objected to the manner of spending the money and to the districts which were given aid, claiming that Mr. Bustani was more generous in his electoral districts than in other districts which were in need of help.

The Prime Minister was given the floor at his own request. He pointed out that instead of insisting on the extra urgent form, a member can present a draft for a smaller sum of money which the Department of National Construction could use while the Committee of Budget and Finance was studying the draft for 10,000,000 L.L.¹

Mr. Bashir al-Awar recommended giving the Department a sum of four million pounds. The Minister of Finance amended Mr. al-Awar's suggestion, limiting the sum to two million pounds. The amendment was accepted.

Mr. Bustani then took the floor to reply to the questions of Messrs. Chadir and al-Khalil and insisted on the extra-urgent form. Mr. Khalil took the floor again and insisted on the removal of the extra-urgent form, he also asked the Speaker to appoint a committee to study the needs of the various districts and to investigate Mr. Bustani's reports in respect to the distribution of funds for construction in the various districts concerned.

At this stage, the Speaker declared the final form of the draft which was as follows:

A draft for lending the Department of National Construction the sum

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Regular Session, Third Meeting, October 30, 1956. pp. 25-31. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

of two million Lebanese pounds.

The Government is entitled to lend the Department of National Construction the sum of two million Lebanese pounds from the general treasury. This draft will be enacted immediately it is published.

The Speaker asked for approval to give the draft the extra urgent form and received a majority of votes. He then presented the draft for a roll call, and a majority of the members present approved the draft. Finally the Chair declared the draft enacted be a majority vote.¹

On October 31, 1956, in the fourth meeting of the Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Bustani announced that the Committee of Budget and Finance had approved the draft for 10,000,000 L.L. This statement was confirmed by Mr. Chadir, chairman of the Committee who asked that the matter be accepted for discussion. After discussing the pros and cons of the issue, the Speaker asked that the draft be read. A draft similar to the previous one was read, and the same procedure of voting and declaring the results of the vote as an act was followed.²

Case Study on the Amendment of the Constitution

Mr. Speaker

According to article 77 of the Constitution, we the undersigned,

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Regular Session, Third Meeting, October 30, 1956. pp. 25-31. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Regular Session, Fourth Meeting, October 31, 1956. pp. 53-61. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

wish to place the following recommendation for amendment to article five of the Constitution: That the Lebanese flag be of two colors, red and white, stripped horizontally with a green cedar tree in the center. The middle white section should be equal in size to the two red sections. The green cedar should be in the center of the white section with its top touching the upper red stripe and its base resting on the lower.¹ red section. The size of the cedar should be one-third of the white section.

The undersigned members request that their proposal be placed before the Chamber of Deputies for acceptance.

Beirut, November 11, 1943

(Signed by ten members)

The Speaker then asked that decree No. 133 of November 30, 1943, concerning the amendment of article five of the Constitution be read.

Decree No. 133/K

Article one: The President of the Lebanese Republic, according to the Lebanese Constitution of May 23, 1926 which was amended on October 17,

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Fifth Session, Second Irregular Session, Fourth Meeting, December 1, 1943. pp. 65-66. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

1927, May 9, 1929, and November 8, 1943, and upon the request of the Prime Minister, decrees that the proposal related to the question of amending article five of the Constitution relating to the flag shall be referred to the Chamber of Deputies to be discussed in its present regular session.¹

Article Two: It is the duty of the Prime Minister to publish and declare the decree whenever necessary.

Beirut, November 30, 1943

Signature: Bishara Khalil al-Khoury

President of the Republic

Riad es-Solh

Prime Minister

The Speaker asked that the above mentioned draft be read; he then put it directly to a roll call vote. The draft was approved by all members.²

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Fifth Session, Second Irregular Session, Fourth Meeting, December 1, 1943. pp. 65-66. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Fifth Session, Second Irregular Session, Fourth Meeting, December 1, 1943. pp. 56-66. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

FINANCIAL LEGISLATION

Financial Legislation is divided into the following:

1. Financial Laws
2. Budgetary Laws

Financial Laws

Financial Laws cover loans, taxes, customs, contracts, concessions, enterprises and exploitations of the natural resources.

Taxes or custom duties cannot be passed except by virtue of a law (Constitution: article 81). Also extraordinary credit may not be granted except by a special law. Should urgent expenditures be necessary, the President of the Republic with the approval of the Council of Ministers issues a decree for supplementary expenditures not exceeding 15,000 L.L. per item. These measures must be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies for approval at its first ensuing session. (Constitution: article 85) This article gives the Council of Ministers the power to issue expenditures without the permission of the Chamber of Deputies. It is true that the amount is limited, but experience has shown that the Council of Ministers has exceeded this limit.

Public debts or loans may not be contracted except in accordance with a law. (Constitution: article 88) Contracts or concessions for the exploitation of national wealth or public loans cannot be granted except by virtue of a law and only for a limited period. (Constitution: article 89) This is the exclusive right of the Chamber of Deputies.

Budget

No government can remain in power and provide its citizens with internal and external security except if there is money. The government obtains most of its money from the people through taxation and through national resources; since the greatest source of income comes from the people, then the decision of collecting taxes and spending tax money must come from the people's representative, the Chamber of Deputies.

During every October session, the Council of Ministers presents before the Chamber of Deputies its general fiscal policy for discussion. (Constitution: article 32) The procedure is as follows: The Minister of Finance prepares a budgetary draft after having contacted the various Ministries asking each to submit their own budget. He then submits the budget to the Chamber of Deputies at least fifteen days before the beginning of the October session. The October session is designated especially for approval of the budget; and if the budget is not ready at the end of the session, an irregular session must be called. The irregular session would then start at the beginning of January and end the beginning of February. If by the end of the additional period the Chamber of Deputies has not reached any final decision concerning the budget, one of two things happen; The President of the Republic may, with the approval of the Council of Ministers issue a Decree giving effect to the budget in the form in which the Council of Ministers had submitted in to the Chamber of Deputies at least fifteen days before the commencement of its session. The second possibility is to extend the

irregular session. (Constitution: article 86)

x So far, the Council of Ministers has used this right only two times; in 1957,¹ and 1958.² In 1957, the budget was decreed in a new way; a deputy presented an extra urgent request asking that the President of the Republic after obtaining the approval of the Council of Ministers promulgates the budget of the year in accordance with the report of the Committee of Budget and Finance. The draft was accepted. Following is a detailed description as to the steps taken in obtaining this request.

Case Study: Extra Urgent Draft

That the Budget of 1957 be declared by a Presidential Decree in accordance with the report of the Committee of Budget and Finance, and that it should be put into execution immediately after publication.

29/1/57

Kathem Khadry

Purpose of this request: the irregular session appointed to study the budget will end on 31/1/57. Since the Committee of Budget and Finance has finished studying the budget as a whole and the time is not sufficient to discuss it in the Chamber of Deputies, this is sufficient reason

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Irregular Session, Fourth Meeting, January 29, 1957. pp. 643-653. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) (No. 51, December 13, 1958). p. 691. Official Journal.

to put the request in the extra urgent form.

The floor was opened to discussion. Many Deputies opposed the draft on the pretext that it was unconstitutional since the budget is strictly a matter concerning the Chamber of Deputies; and by interfering with this right, the Council of Ministers and the President would be interfering with the affairs of the Chamber of Deputies. Some members pointed out that, constitutionally speaking, voting should take place on every article separately while the report of the Committee of Budget and Finance covered the budget as a whole.¹

Those who favoured the draft of Mr. Kadry found nothing unconstitutional. The Constitution, they argued, gives the President the right to decree the budget, if the Council of Ministers has sent the draft of the budget to the Chamber of Deputies fifteen days prior to the session and an irregular session expired without arriving at a decision.

In the next meeting, the Speaker put Mr. Kadry's draft up for vote; it obtained the approval of the majority. Similarly, the draft for the budget as amended by the Committee of Budget and Finance obtained the majority vote.²

Upon receipt of the budget draft from the Minister of Finance, the Speaker immediately refers it to the Committee of Budget and Finance.

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Irregular Session, Fourth Meeting, January 29, 1957. pp. 643-653. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Eighth Session, Second Irregular Session, Fifth Meeting, January 31, 1957. pp. 661-666. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

This Committee calls for successive meetings and asks each minister to attend the meeting which concerns his ministry. The Minister of Finance is invited to all the meetings of the committee; other Ministries may also send representatives to discuss their particular budgets. Members of the Chamber of Deputies have only an advisory power in the committee meetings.

After the Committee of Budget and Finance completes its study of the draft, its report is submitted to Chamber of Deputies for approval. The first few meetings of the Chamber of Deputies are spent in a general survey of the budget. The Minister of Finance may raise an objection if the Committee report omits a point mentioned in the draft by the Council of Ministers; in this case, the Minister of Finance must explain the importance of the point. However, the Chamber of Deputies has the final say; in any case, neither the Chamber of Deputies nor the Committee of Budget and Finance have the right to refuse paying a debt incurred within constitutional limits by the Council of Ministers. (Internal Law: article 100)

Voting on the budget takes place in the following manner: a vote is first taken for rejecting, then for reducing and finally for approving the report of the Committee. (Internal Law: article 101) If two requests for reducing the figure are advanced, the greater figure is voted upon first; (Internal Law: article 102) not more than two requests of this kind are acceptable. If the requests fail, the sum recommended by the Committee of Budget and Finance is voted upon. If this also meets with

failure, the figure suggested by the Council of Ministers is then approved. (Internal Law: article 103)

In respect to increasing expenses, article 84 of the Constitution provides that during meetings which are meant for discussing the budget, a Deputy does not have the right to recommend laws which may increase expenses without the approval of the Council of Ministers. However, Deputies can refuse or reduce credit. (Internal Law: article 99)

The Council of Ministers, for example, may present a draft to increase funds to build four schools, ^{and} during the discussion, the majority of the members of the Chamber of Deputies may be in favour of raising the number of schools to eight. However, the Deputies do not have the constitutional right to impose this on the Council of Ministers. To overcome this obstacle, the draft is accepted; afterwards, several Deputies may submit another draft which would increase the number of schools from four to eight. This draft does not require the approval of the Council of Ministers. The approval of a quorum number of the members of the Chamber is sufficient to pass the draft.¹

THE CONTROLLING POWERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

The controlling powers which the Chamber of Deputies has over the Council of Ministers are the following:

¹ A. al-Khateeb, al-Usul al-Parlemanayah fi Lebanon wa^{sa'ir} al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961). pp. 357-371. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

1. Questioning
2. Interpellation
3. Parliamentary Investigation
4. Ministerial Responsibility

Questioning

It is the duty and right of the Chamber of Deputies to be fully informed about all the activities of the Council of Ministers, Deputies are entitled to question the Ministers. This right of questioning may be exercised either individually or collectively. Ministers are collectively responsible for the general policy of the Council of Ministers and individually responsible for their respective Ministries. (Constitution: article 66) Questions may be asked purely for the sake of acquiring more information about a certain subject; discussion and voting does not ordinarily follow. If an answer to a question is not satisfactory, it may be subjected to interpollation.

It is the right of every member of the Chamber of Deputies to direct questions, either oral or written, to either the Council of Ministers or to one Minister alone. In the case of an oral question, it must be raised in a meeting set for this purpose. The Minister to whom the question is directed may give an immediate answer or may reserve his reply to the following meeting. (Internal Law: article 68) If the question is submitted in written form, it is directed to the Council of Ministers or to the Minister concerned through the Speaker. A period of ten days is allowed for the answer. (Internal Law: article 68)

The questions and answers are printed and distributed among the deputies and are read aloud in a special meeting appointed for questions. If, at this point, the questioners are not satisfied, they may require that their questions be subject to interpellation. (Internal Law: article 70)

Interpellation

Every Deputy has the right to interpellate a Minister or the Council of Ministers. A request for interpellation must include a detailed report of the matter to be interpellated. It is submitted to the Speaker and through him to the Council of Ministers; (Internal Law: article 72) the Council of Ministers must give a written answer within ten days; consequently, a date is set whereupon the question is placed before the Chamber of Deputies for interpellation. The question and reply of the Council of Ministers must be mimeographed and given to all members of the Chamber of Deputies two days prior to the meeting. (Internal Law: article 73)

In interpellation, the Council of Minister is asked to justify and clarify its action; the Deputies can raise objections against or comment on its actions. When interpellation is taking place, the Deputy who raised the question, and the Minister concerned are given priority to speak twice in succession. (Internal Law : article 73) In case the interpellator is not satisfied with the minister's argument, he may then present his reasons, otherwise, he may withdraw his request and another Deputy may take up the same question. (Internal Law: article 74)

The decision to dismiss or continue the interpellation comes from the Chamber of Deputies. If the interpellation is closed, it means that the policy of the Council of Ministers is approved. If the Speaker decides that the interpellation is to be continued, a vote of confidence must then be taken. (Internal Law: article 75)

A Case Study on Questioning

On Tuesday February 23, 1960, at 6:30 p.m., the Chamber of Deputies held its first meeting of the second irregular session for that year. The Speaker, Mr. Sabry Himadeh, opened the meeting by calling for the names of the¹ absent members to be read. The Speaker then read the Presidential Decree calling for an irregular session for the purpose of considering some drafts referred to the Chamber by the Council of Ministers.

Having finished, the Speaker stated that the meeting of the day was especially held for interpellation; whereby, Mr. Raymond Edde objected. Mr. Edde's objection was based on article ten of the Internal Law which clearly states that the Parliament Office should prepare the agenda for the meeting. The Speaker said that his deviation from the regular routine was because the meeting of the second regular session was appointed for interpellation, but there was no quorum. Accordingly, the Speaker decided to have this first meeting for interpellation and

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, Second Irregular Session, First Meeting, February 23, 1960. pp. 894-895. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

questioning. Mr. Edde seemed satisfied.

The Speaker then asked that the names of the interpellators and their subjects be read according to their proper sequence; the same was done with questions directed to the Council of Ministers.

The Speaker asked that the questions be first read then the answers of the Minister or Council of Ministers. A secretary read the following letter written by Mr. Eliah Abu-Jawdah in the form of a question.¹

Mr. Speaker,

Kindly refer this question to the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers agreed on May 20, 1957, to guarantee a loan of 200,000 L.L. from the Bank of Syria and Lebanon to the municipality of Hammana for construction of a sewage network in the town. Since the Council of Ministers has asked the Chamber of Deputies to present the draft for the purpose of re-studying, and up to the present, the Council of Ministers has not given an account concerning the above mentioned loan, I ask the Council of Minister to present the reasons for this delay, pointing out that the loan is necessary to carrying out important projects, especially since the mentioned town is one of the most important summer resorts in Lebanon.

Beirut, December 23, 1958

Deputy of Southern Metten
Eliah Abu-Jawdeh

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, Second Irregular Session, First Meeting, February 23, 1960. pp. 894-895. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

The Speaker referred the question to the Council of Ministers, who submitted the following answer:¹

Mr. Speaker,

In answer to your letter No. 872, dated December 27, 1958, concerning a question submitted by deputy Elish Abu-Jawdeh, concerning a loan to the municipality of Hammana, I am glad to inform you that the Council of Ministers agreed in its meeting of May 10, 1957, on a loan of 200,000 L.L. to the municipality of Hammana from the Bank of Syria and Lebanon under the guarantee of the Council of Ministers. The draft loan was submitted to the Chamber of Deputies by Decree No. 17816 dated December 27, 1957. The Council of Ministers has not yet received any acknowledgement from the Chamber of Deputies.

With all my respects,

Beirut, December 19, 1959

Prime Minister

Rachid Karameh²

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, Second Irregular Session, First Meeting, February 23, 1960. pp. 894-895. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, Second Irregular Session, First Meeting, February 23, 1960. pp. 894-895. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

Case Study on Interpellation

Concerning interpellation, nearly the same procedure is followed. However, interpellation opens the way for a vote of confidence. Article 77 of the Internal Law states that in any meeting, a Deputy or a member of the Council of Ministers can ask for a vote of confidence.

The Speaker asked that the question of Mr. Chafik Murtada, Deputy of Baalbek, be read. The secretary did so, pointing out that Mr. Murtada's issue related to the general policy of the Council of Ministers; and since he had not received any answer to his question, Mr. Murtada has asked that his question be referred for interpellation. In the light of the interpellation he then asked for a vote of confidence in accordance with article 37 of the Constitution, and article 77 of the Internal Law.

After the letter was read, the Speaker opened the floor for discussion giving Mr. Murtada the priority of stating and elaborating his points. When the Deputy finished, the Speaker gave the floor to the Premier, who seemed to be able to give the Deputy satisfactory answers. Mr. Murtada then took the floor again; he thanked the Speaker and the Premier and said he was satisfied with the answers and did not wish to carry on his request for interpellation.

At that point, Mr. Nuhad Bweiz asked for permission to adopt Mr. Murtada's interpellation. The Speaker granted his request; many other Deputies elaborated on the points in question according to their turn. The Minister of Information then asked to end the discussion.

Every one agreed to this proposal. The meeting was then adjourned until March 3, 1960.¹

During the March 3rd meeting, after the discussion of all points under interpellation, Mr. Emile Bustani moved to close the discussion and asked ^{for} a vote of confidence. This was seconded by Mr. Nicola Salem. The Speaker asked the opinion of other Deputies and obtained approval of the majority. Accordingly, the secretary called the names of the Deputies present, resulting in thirty-nine votes for confidence, and three votes for no confidence. The Speaker declared the meeting closed.²

Parliamentary Investigation

For the Chamber of Deputies to be able to carry on efficiently its legislative work as well as to exercise control over the Council of Ministers, it must be given the means to do so, mainly to investigate and study the matters in question.

Investigation may concern one or a number of interrelated matters. It mainly concerns drafts presented for legislation, an important political question, or inefficiency in administration. Parliamentary investigation can be instigated in the form of either a question or an

¹ Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, Second Irregular Session, First Meeting February 23, 1960. pp. 909-928. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

² Lebanon, Mahadir Jalsat Majlis an-Nuwab (in Arabic) Nineth Session, Second Irregular Session, Second Meeting, March 3, 1960. pp. 935-938. Minutes of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies.

interpellation. (Internal Law: article 91)

Parliamentary Investigation is carried out by a committee of Investigation, elected by the Speaker and the committee concerned with the subject under investigation. The Committee of Investigation submits its report to the Speaker or Committee concerned. (Internal Law: article 92) The Committee of Investigation can ask for all the records and documents pertaining to the matter under investigation and can also question responsible people in the various departments. (Internal Law: article 93) The Chamber of Deputies can give the Committee of Investigation the judicial investigating power, provided that a majority of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies approve. (Internal Law: article 94)

Ministerial Responsibility

The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Chamber for the general policy of the Government and individually responsible for their individual actions. (Constitution: article 66) Ministerial Responsibilities are:

1. Criminal Responsibilities

The Chamber of Deputies may impeach the Council of Ministers for high treason or for serious neglect of its duties. A decision of impeachment needs a two-thirds majority of the total membership of the Chamber of Deputies. (Constitution: article 70) The Minister or Ministers shall leave office once their accusation is issued, and their resignation does not protect them from judicial proceedings. (Constitution: article 72)

2. Political Responsibility

Political responsibility covers the general policy of the Council of Ministers, and the responsibility here is both individual as well as collective. Collective responsibility constitutes the responsibility of the Council of Ministers as a whole for the policy it has undertaken upon obtaining a vote of confidence. (Constitution: article 66) However, collective responsibility does not mean that if the Chamber of Deputies refuses a draft put forth by the Council of Ministers that the latter should ask for a vote of confidence. Defeat on an issue does not necessarily mean that the Chamber of Deputies opposes the general policy of the Council of Ministers. Once the Chamber of Deputies decides to withdraw confidence, the Council of Ministers or the Minister concerned must resign. (Constitution: article 68)

A vote for confidence may be called for in any meeting, by a Deputy, a Minister or the Council of Ministers as a whole. (Internal Law: article 77) If it originates with a Deputy, then it must have the approval of the Chamber of Deputies. If accepted, the Deputy as well as the Council of Ministers may ask to delay the meeting for confidence for five days. (Internal Law: article 77) If the Council of Ministers asks for a vote of confidence, while the Chamber of Deputies is discussing a draft law submitted by the Council of Ministers, then this means that the vote of confidence is connected with the acceptance or refusal of the draft law. If the draft law is refused then this means that the Council of Ministers has lost confidence. On the other hand, the Chamber of Deputies may refuse the request of the Council of Ministers for a

vote of confidence, in this case if the draft law is refused it does not mean that the Council of Ministers has lost confidence.¹

The Lebanese Constitution and the Internal Law of Procedure both fail to mention the majority needed for a vote of confidence. The general practice, however, is that the majority of the members present is sufficient; in which case a simple majority of the Chamber could defeat the Council of Ministers in Lebanon. Often a majority of the Deputies present at the meeting do not constitute a majority of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies.

Amending the Constitution

The President of the Republic may suggest a revision of the Constitution; his suggestion is placed before the Chamber of Deputies in the form of a draft law. (Constitution: article 76) The Constitution may also be revised upon the recommendation of the Chamber of Deputies. The following procedure is observed. The recommendation must be made during a regular session on the proposal of at least ten members of the Chamber of Deputies. The articles referred to in the recommendation must be clearly defined. For the recommendation to pass, it needs approval of two-thirds of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies. The Speaker transmits the recommendation to the Government to be put in the form of a draft law. If the Government does not approve the recommendation, it shall return the decision to the Chamber for reconsideration. The Chamber must now approve by a three-fourths majority of its total members,

¹ A. al-Khateeb, *al-Usul al-Parlemanayah fi Lubnan wa sa'ir al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah* (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961), p. 396. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

and the President can either consent or issue a decree dissolving the Chamber, and appointing a date for the new elections. If the new Chamber continues to insist on the amendment, the President of the Republic then has no choice but to consent to the wishes of the Chamber; the Government must prepare the draft law within four months. (Constitution: article 77)

When the draft law for amendment is transmitted to the Chamber of Deputies, it must be discussed and voted upon it before other business may be considered. (Constitution: article 78) The Chamber may not discuss or vote upon the draft unless there is a two-thirds quorum of its members. (Constitution: article 79)

ELECTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Members of the Chamber of Deputies shall elect the President of the Republic for a six year's term, by secret ballot; a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies is required for the election, but after the first ballot an absolute majority is sufficient for election. (Constitution: article 49) The Chamber of Deputies shall be called by the President of the Republic at least one and at the most two months before the expiration of his term so a new President can be elected. If the Chamber of Deputies is not summoned for this purpose, it shall meet and elect a new President on the tenth day preceeding the expiration of the President's term of office. (Constitution: article 73)

Should the Presidency become vacant through resignation or death, the Chamber of Deputies is requested to meet immediately and elect a successor. If, however, the Chamber of Deputies is dissolved, electoral bodies are convened and immediately after the elections, the Chamber of Deputies meets to elect the President. (Constitution: article 74)

When the Chamber of Deputies meets to elect the President, it shall be considered an electoral and not a legislative body. (Constitution: article 75)

THE JUDICIAL POWERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

The Chamber of Deputies exercises its judicial powers through the Supreme Council. Article 80 of the Constitution provides that the
X Supreme Council shall consist of seven Deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies and eight judges from the judicial hierarchy according to their rank or seniority. The meetings of the Supreme Council are presided by the judge who is highest in rank.

A decision of condemnation by the Supreme Council requires ten votes; however, a special law is to be issued to determine the procedure to be followed by the Supreme Council. (Constitution: article 80)

Following are the powers of the Supreme Council:

1. Article 60 of the Constitution provides that the President of the Republic can be ~~pe~~ prosecuted for high treason and violation of the Constitution. According to the same article, should the President be impeached by a two-thirds majority of all members of the Chamber of

Deputies, the Presidency remains vacant until the Supreme Council settles the matter.

2. Articles 70 and 71 of the Constitution allow for prosecution of Ministers for high treason and for neglect of their duties.

CONCLUSION

The Constitution, the Internal Law of Procedure and the Electoral Law are the main sources of law which define the works, rights and privileges of the Chamber of Deputies. These designate that:

1. Though the Chamber of Deputies is the Legislative body and is entitled to the power of amending the Constitution, this power does not entitle the Chamber of Deputies to violate the Constitution.

2. The Internal Law of Procedure is the second source of law in our Parliamentary system. It is the set of rules which determine the functions and methods of operation of the Chamber of Deputies.

3. The Electoral Law defines the method of election and the accreditation of credentials of candidates and electors.

The following pages point out the weaknesses, contradictions and vaguenesses found in the Constitution, the Internal Law of Procedure and the Electoral Law.

Parliament Office

Article 3 of the Internal Law provides that in electing the Parliament Office, first the Speaker is elected, then the Deputy Speaker, separately, then the two secretaries on one ballot and lastly the remaining three members on one ballot. Article 44 of the Constitution provides that the

two secretaries shall be elected by separate ballots.

The second paragraph of article 3 of the Internal Law provides that an absolute majority of those present is needed on the first ballot election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, while a simple majority is sufficient on the second ballot. For electing the secretaries and the three members this article calls for a simple majority. Article 44 of the Constitution allows election by simple majority on the third ballot for the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and two secretaries.

This contradiction was overlooked; the practice followed the letter of the Internal Law until the October session of 1959, when Mr. Anwar al-Khateeb called it to the attention of the Chamber of Deputies and insisted that in such circumstances the practice should be in accordance with the letter of the Constitution. His recommendation was accepted, but after the election of the Parliamentary Office.¹ However, on checking the Minutes of the Chamber of Deputies this event was not mentioned.

Minutes of the Chamber of Deputies

The decisions taken by the Chamber of Deputies are not considered legal until the minutes are approved either at the end of the meeting or in the next meeting by a majority of the Deputies present. According to article 13 of the Internal Law, the Head of the Diwan appoints three

¹ A. al-Khateeb, al-Usul al-Parlemanayah fi Lubnan wa Sair al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961) pp. 54-55. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

persons from the personnel of the Diwan to take down the minutes of the meeting. Usually, the Speaker distributes the names of the Deputies among the three clerks so that they can register all the discussions. However, since they do not use the shorthand method, these clerks fail to take down all that is said and discussed. A basic weakness lies in the method of taking down the minutes whereby precision is impossible. Special recorders must be provided for this purpose, or a special shorthand system must be devised for this purpose.

Validity of a Mandate

Article 30 of the Constitution states that the Deputies alone shall have the competence to judge the validity of their mandate. Article 16 of the Internal Law provides that the new Chamber of Deputies should, in the meeting following the election of the members of the Parliamentary Office, elect a Committee of Verification consisting of five members to study the validity of the elections and to submit a report of its findings.

This article is vague in the sense that it does not state who can raise the question of validity or non-validity of the mandate of a Deputy, whether it is the people or the Deputies. Nor does it define the procedure which the Committee goes through to submit the report. It does not state the majority needed for such a vote; however, this is designated in article 30 of the Constitution, where it says that no Deputy's mandate may be invalidated except by a majority of two-thirds of the vote of the entire membership. In addition to the vagueness in article 16, another point may be raised in respect to both of the above

mentioned articles. What would be the position of the Chamber of Deputies in case the Committee of Verification submits a report against a Deputy? According to article 30 of the Constitution, the Deputies alone shall have the competence to judge the validity of their mandate. Under such circumstances, the Chamber of Deputies is no longer considered a Legislative but a Judicial body. Here the question raised is, can the Deputies as well as the five members of the Committee of Verification in the capacity of judges act impartially when they may have personal reasons that might influence their decision for or against the Deputy concerned? On the other hand, these same Deputies may sometimes have to be judged, so why not be friendly.

No Deputy's mandate has ever been invalidated in Lebanon, though some petitions by the Committee of Verifications have been filed to this effect.¹ This fact points out the insufficiency in this procedure. Would not the results be better if the Committee of Verification was appointed from the Judicial body? In my opinion, the mandate should be studied and judged by members of the Judiciary. This would undoubtedly ensure more efficiency and impartiality.

Committee Meetings

Article 23 of the Internal Law provides that the Minister concerned shall attend all meetings of his respective committee. This article fails

¹ A. al-Khateeb, al-Usul al-Parlemaniyyah fi Lubnan Wa Sa'ir al-Bilad al-Arabiyyah (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayine, 1961). pp. 105-117. Parliamentary Principles in Lebanon and the Arab Countries.

to point out whether the meeting should not be held without the presence of the Minister if he does not appear.

Article 27 of the Internal Law allows committees to ask through the Speaker for any documents or references of any matter under study from the different departments of the government. In case the committee requests such references, the matter will not be discussed until such references can be secured. This article not only delays the work of the committees but also gives the Council of Ministers the opportunity to interfere if they are not in favour of the matter in question. The Minister concerned can ask a department to delay giving the requested information.

Article 32 provides that if a question is under study by more than one committee, the committees either meet jointly with the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker presiding over the meeting. On the other hand, each committee can meet separately and submit a separate report to the Chamber of Deputies for final decision.

The second part of this article lacks precision; it fails to state whether the matter should be referred to all committees concerned at the same time or whether it should be sent from one committee to the other. What would happen if the committees concerned submit different and conflicting reports. Article 32 failed to clarify this point; however, the logical conclusion is that in case of a conflict, the Speaker would call for a joint committee to try to reach a compromise. If this is not obtained then the different reports will have to be placed before the Chamber of Deputies for a vote, thus causing unnecessary delay.

The first part of the article alone would have been sufficient and more precise.

Voting

The question of voting is not well defined in either the Constitution or the Internal Law; in some articles there are conflicts. The question of majority is often vague and varies in different instances. Article 34 of the Constitution states that the Chamber of Deputies shall not be validly constituted unless a majority of the total membership is present. Decisions (qararat) shall be taken by a majority vote, but this principle of majority is not the one followed in all matters upon which the Chamber of Deputies vote. In some instances, a majority of the total membership is needed for a decision to be valid. If we take the majority required in article 34 of the Constitution, the number that constitutes a quorum is 50 Deputies, thus ensuring a decision by a simple majority of 26. We see that decisions may not always have the favour of a majority of the members of the Chamber of Deputies. Two points must here be emphasized. First, the decisions of the Chamber of Deputies should be made by a majority of the total membership in order to abide by the true principle of representation; secondly, to be able to have the largest number of votes possible, the question of attendance of the Deputies must be taken more seriously.

In a few specific cases, the Constitution defines the majority needed. Regarding the election of the President of the Republic, article 49 of the Constitution states that the President of the Republic shall

be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. It does not say a two-thirds majority of its total members. His impeachment and the impeachment of members of the Council of Ministers need a two-third majority of the total membership. (Constitution: articles 60 and 70)

Article 77 of the Constitution states that during an ordinary session and on the proposal of at least ten of its members, the Chamber of Deputies may recommend the revision of the Constitution by a two-thirds majority of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber. Then article 79 says that when a draft law concerning a constitutional amendment is submitted to the Chamber of Deputies, it cannot discuss or vote upon the draft except when a majority of two-thirds of the members lawfully composing the Chamber of Deputies are present. Voting shall likewise be by the same majority.

Is not amending the Constitution as important as election and impeachment of the President of the Republic? Why should the question of majority vary in such similarly important matters? Furthermore, should the question of majority differ in the same matter; namely, why should the recommendation for amendment (Constitution: article 77) require a two-thirds majority of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies, while voting on amendment needs only two-thirds of the two-thirds required for the quorum? (Constitution: article 79)

It is strongly recommended that the question of voting should be more clarified and unified. The two-thirds should always be taken as the basis for quorum, whether voting on decisions, electing and

impeaching the President and the Ministers as well as amending the Constitution.

Investigation

Articles 91 and 92 of the Internal Law give the Chamber of Deputies the right to investigate all matters brought to its attention through a special committee of Deputies, known as the Committee of Investigation. Article 94 of the Internal Law gives the Committee of Investigation, the power of Judicial body of investigation, provided an absolute majority of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies approve.

This article is very general and does not elaborate on the details of this power. Does it mean that members of such a committee can interview and question witnesses, study the judicial details of the matters in question and make their recommendations? This article allows the Chamber of Deputies to interfere in the works of the Judiciary, in that it places the Deputies in the position of judges and gives them the power to decide on matters which are outside their field of specialization as most of the Deputies are not acquainted with the works of courts.

Question of Confidence

Article 75 of the Internal Law states that if interpellation is closed, the policy of the Council of Ministers is approved there is no need for a vote of confidence, while article 37 of the Constitution states that every Deputy shall have the absolute right to raise the

question of no-confidence during the ordinary and extra-ordinary sessions. This article is in conflict with article 75 of the Internal Law.

This attempt at criticizing the letter of the Constitution, the Internal Law of procedure and the Electoral Law may not be an adequate one; other points worthy of criticism may have been overlooked, or misunderstood. However, the points brought up were the ones I found most striking during my study of the three documents. What I wish to emphasize is that though there are some weaknesses, conflicts and vaguenesses in the letter of these three documents, they are not able to paralyze or obstruct a good Parliamentary practice. When suggestion towards improving the Parliamentary system in Lebanon are to be made, we find that amending or changing the letter of the law is not the important thing. What has led to the failure of true Parliamentary practice in Lebanon is the Lebanese society.

After the above criticism of the Lebanese Parliamentary system with regard to its organization, procedure and functions, it is worthwhile to ask the following question. Has the Parliamentary system succeeded, or has it failed to serve its purpose in Lebanon? Is the system a true representative of the people? I believe not.

In the following pages, I shall point out the basic causes that lead to the failure of this system. My conclusions have been reached after a series of interviews with some of the leading political figures of the country,¹ research on the subject, as well as my impressions as

¹ See Appendix.

a Lebanese about the Lebanese social, economic and political life.

The basis of a democracy is popular sovereignty. This means a society in which peoples' minds and actions are free, and where they are able to make their own decisions without outside influence. Democracy is not a mere form of government which can be applied to any society. It will turn to anarchy or to the centralization of power if it is adopted by a society which is not prepared for it.

The Lebanese Constitution was drawn up in 1926, during the French Mandate. It was patterned after the Constitution of the Third French Republic of 1875. At the same time the Internal Law of Procedure was drawn, on the pattern of French laws. The first Internal Law was introduced in 1922, amended and adopted by the Chamber of Deputies in 1926, and remained till 1953, when a new Internal Law of Procedure, similar to the old one was drawn; this was amended in 1957 and is still in practice.

The Lebanese Constitution was imposed upon the people, in the sense that the draft was prepared and studied by a committee under the observation of the High Commissioner. The people were given a Constitution that provided for a sound democratic and representative system without preparing them for it. In the attempt to establish a democratic institution, the result was most undemocratic; representation was monopolized by a group of Lebanese who do not represent the majority. Through the pretence of free elections, this group always managed to be elected, as most of the electors depended on this ruling class for their subsistence. On the other hand, this class had to serve the

wishes and needs of the electors to guarantee its re-election. This ruling class must also stay in the good grace of the Executive as elections are carried out under its direction; therefore, no candidate wishes to lose the support and the good will of the Executive. This results in a pact between the Executive and the Legislative. This pact amounts to class dictatorship, or political and economic feudalism, thus permitting members of the Legislature to become instruments in the hands of the Executive for fear of dissolution and in order to ensure the collaboration of the Executive in serving their interests. On the other hand, the Executive allows members of the Legislature to interfere in the state apparatus to ensure the Executive's continuence. Another important factor of this compact, is that both the Council of Ministers and the Chamber of Deputies fall under the influence of the President of the Republic, who may always threaten with dissolution.

The increase in the powers of the President of the Republic are caused by the attachment of people to their positions and not to the letter of the law. Here arises a very important feature in our political life, individualism, which is an immediate result of feudalism and confessionism. Thus, a Deputy, instead of representing the nation as a whole, represents only the interests of his electors.

Unfortunately, most Lebanese are blind to this fact. It has become a tradition for the lower and uneducated classes to elect those leaders who fit into this pattern. Ways of enlightening the masses are still greatly lacking. The Ministry of Information with its main tool, the Broadcasting Station, has so far remained passive. The Press seems

to be more interested in criticising the results of the situation rather than its basic causes. The supposedly enlightened middle class either lacks interest to go to the election ^{polls} or is hopeless about the situation. Those who are conscious of the cause and the remedy are few and ineffective.

These basic short-comings in the Lebanese society are the major factors which infringe upon the sovereignty of the people.

The first step towards improving the political situation would be to define what is meant by the words Lebanon and Lebanese. These terms evoke differing and contradictory definitions. Descendants of the old Mutassarifiya confine the term to themselves. The inhabitants of the annexed parts of present Lebanon (Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon and the Bekaa district) vary in their feelings with regards to their nationality; others do not regard themselves as Syrians or Lebanese, but as followers of one feudal lord or another. So the first step is to define the Lebanese nationality.

Labor, capital, natural resources, and entrepreneurship are factors of production. In so far as natural resources are concerned, opportunities are very limited. Economic activity in Lebanon has depended mostly upon the human factor. The Lebanese, more educated than their neighbours, can best provide services which they need and can not perform. Today, the picture is changing; opportunities for performing services are becoming limited, and there is an increasing necessity for industrialization and agricultural improvements. The government now finds it necessary to change the character of the Lebanese economy.

It has been suggested that the only way to a healthy economic system is the nationalization of public utilities and large industries. I believe that the state should, without exercising complete control, be an important factor in building the economy of the country. The state can aid by encouraging industrial institutions, agricultural experiment stations, labour unions, and a sound social security system. Money should be set aside to assist such institutions, which at the beginning may be loosing (i)nterprises. The government must help them to survive, in order to aid the development of the country. Strict attention should be paid to the levying of taxes; no favoritism should be allowed in such procedure. Lebanon has a good taxing system; unfortunately, it is levied only from people of the middle and lower classes.

To realize a healthy representative system governments must work towards a healthy economic system.

Efficiency in government administration is an important factor to consider in building up the national economy. The present Lebanese administration lacks efficiency and specialization. This situation is due to the fact that many of the employees in key positions obtained their offices due to their affiliation with a certain religious sect, or to an influential individual, not to efficiency and competency.

Lebanon, with its present budget, can not meet all the needs of the country. If it desires to follow a healthy educational policy, the government should seriously study the financial responsibilities and should then plan accordingly. I believe that, Lebanon can not

at present, nationalize all elementary and secondary schools; however, it certainly can help in unifying the program in all government and private schools. To achieve this, the government should appoint a committee formed of Lebanese specialists in education, and representatives of foreign institutions in Lebanon to study and form a program based on the needs of the country. In addition to this Messrs. Alfred Nakash, Fuad Butros and Raymond Edde, believe that military training for boys as well as social training for girls is necessary, and would help in promoting national understanding and responsibility as well as national unity.

In addition to educating children, the people in Lebanon need civic training in ethical responsibility. This could be achieved through the radio, public spirited societies and press. The people of Lebanon badly need such social training in ethical behaviour to abide by while practicing their social and political rights and duties. The larger part of the Lebanese budget should be given to the Ministries of Education and Information.

All politicians agree that the formation of political parties is the best way to ensure a better system of representation. How can a Party System be established in Lebanon?

After having reviewed the chief evils that underly the Lebanese representative system, whether economic, social or political, it becomes clear that Lebanon has no hope for advancement until these evils are removed. Although there is a general agreement on this, people do not agree on the means. Some have suggested that a dictatorial system could

eliminate all the abuses of which Lebanon has been complaining. I believe in the slow, evolutionary way of progress, which though it consumes time, and wealth, in the end it leads to the ultimate goal of a better representative system. The great power which the Lebanese President of the Republic can exert has proved inadequate for instituting reforms, not to mention the disputes and conflicts arising from a President's active participation in running the government. With the existence of multi-parliamentary groups, with none commanding a majority, the President of the Republic yields a great deal of discretion in choosing and dismissing his Prime Minister, (Constitution: article 53) and can usually find one who readily submits to his influence. Consequently the President can easily secure the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies when he finds it expedient to his interests to do so. (Constitution: article 54) It follows that the Chamber of Deputies is ultimately under the control of the President of the Republic, since many Deputies would become the tools of the latter rather than lose their position which they had secured by widespread personal and economic efforts.

The only conceivable solution is to try to limit the powers of the President which allow him to dissolve the Council of Ministers, and the Executive's power to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, by setting special defined conditions whereby these powers can be exercised. In addition the Executive should have a more stable existence. One provision seems indispensable in this respect - to prohibit Constitutionally the forming of the Council of Ministers from the Chamber of Deputies. This will remove one strong incentive on the part of the Deputies to defeat the Council of Ministers.

Along with the Constitutional amendments suggested for strengthening the Parliamentary system in Lebanon one can also say that the important factor in improving the system of representation is much to depend on the character of the representatives, more than on the written laws; to be able to realize this, mainly to have new elements in the Chamber of Deputies, many social and economic improvements have to be introduced. The public has to be taught to vote for people other than the traditional leaders, and this can be realized by awakening the population to their national and civic responsibilities. Accomplishing Political Parties will emerge as a result of economic reforms, unification of education, and administrative and legislative reforms. With these reforms people will begin to realize the importance of belonging to political parties.

Some people are suspicious of political parties. They feel that political feudalism would be substituted for economic feudalism. In reply to this criticism, one can point out that political feudalism is preferable to the other kinds of feudalism, as political party feudalism cannot be inherited; it must be achieved. Political parties are bound to a doctrine and program which manifest the desires of partisans as well as non-partisans who may approve of the program. A proper party system would provide for at least two parties, in the case of Lebanon it is preferable to have three parties, because of the confessional factor, thus guaranteeing a healthy, constructive opposition, unlike the individual opposition that is now present.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS ASKED TO ELEVEN STATESMEN ON
THE LEBANESE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Did the practice of Parliamentary system in
Lebanon prove to be successful?

Mr. Maurice Gemayel

Kataeb

3/3/61

The Parliamentary system failed because it was forced on the Lebanese by the Mandatory Power.

Mr. Alfred Nakkash

President of the
Republic 1940-1943
5/3/61

The Parliamentary system in Lebanon has failed because there is no balance between the three Government Bodies.

Mr. Abdallah Yafi

8/3/61

The present Parliamentary system is the best for Lebanon's present conditions, although it was not the system chosen by the Lebanese people.

Mr. Raymond Edde

Leader of the National
Bloc and a Deputy
9/3/61

The present Parliamentary system is the best for the present conditions in Lebanon.

Mr. Camille Chamoun

President of the
Republic 1952-1958
Leader of the National
Liberal Party (1958)
Deputy
10/3/61

The Parliamentary system succeeded in Great Britain and the Scandinavian Countries but not in Lebanon.

Mr. Bechara al-Khoury

President of the Republic
1943-1952. Leader of
the Destourein Bloc
15/3/61

Both the Constitution and the Parliament represent the true and actual Lebanon, so it is the best.

Mr. Adnan Hakim

Leader of the Najjades
Party and a Deputy
23/3/61

The Parliamentary system failed in Lebanon because it did not come out of the people's need but it was enforced on the Lebanese.

Mr. Fuad Butros

A Deputy
24/3/61

It is not important to say whether a system has failed or succeeded but it is necessary to see whether it represents the wishes and needs of the people and the country and in this respect we could say that the present Parliamentary System is the best in Lebanon.

Mr. Kamal Djoumblatt

Minister of Education
and Leader of the Pro-
gressive Socialist Party
26/3/61

The Parliamentary system in Lebanon has failed and its failure is due to the source of all evil, individualism in Lebanon which is a destructive factor not only in politics, but also in all economic and social works.

Mr. Ghassan Twaini

27/3/61

No, the Lebanese Parliamentary system was not successful but it served a purpose, mainly that it gave the Lebanese a chance to govern.

Dr. Abdalah Sa'ade

Leader of the PPS
3/4/61

The Parliamentary system during the Mandate was a form more than a practice, but still it had its advantage because it helped prepare the Lebanese for practising the Parliamentary system, which has improved after independence.

What are the weak points and what are the strong points
in this Parliamentary system?

Mr. Maurice Gemayel

- Weak:
- 1) The Parliamentary system does not represent Lebanon's sociological needs.
 - 2) Elections do not really represent the wishes of the people.
 - 3) The needs of a country are dynamic while this system is unchangeable.
- Strong:
- 1) The freedoms granted by the constitution.

Mr. Alfred Nakkash

- Weak:
- 1) It is of one chamber no check on the constitutionality of its decisions.
 - 2) A deputy represents the wishes of individuals and groups.
 - 3) Confessionalism and the lack of true political parties.

Mr. Abdallah Yafi

- Weak:
- 1) Members do not represent the people.
 - 2) Absence of political parties.
 - 3) The probability that membership in Parliament leads to the Council of Ministers.
 - 4) The fact that there is no mention in the Constitution as to the conditions that should defeat the cabinet.

Mr. Raymond Edde

- Weak:
- 1) Elections in Lebanon are based on individuals. It is not national in character, this is due to the absence of political parties, traditional feudalism and confessionalism.
- Strong:
- 1) It allows for confessional equilibrium.

Mr. Camille Chamoun

- Weak:
- 1) Absence of political parties, a true Parliamentary system should be elected on the basis of party representation.

Mr. Bechara al-Khoury

- Weak:
- 1) Absence of political parties.

Mr. Adnan Hakim

- Weak:
- 1) A deputy is an employee of the Council of Ministers.
 - 2) Lack of separation of powers.
 - 3) The Constitution gives the President of the Republic powers without holding him responsible.
- Strong:
- 1) No strong points.

Mr. Fuad Butros

- Weak:
- 1) Based on confessionalism.
 - 2) Feudalism and group affiliations.
 - 3) No civic education for electors or candidates.
 - 4) Individualism plays a strong role in politics.
 - 5) Absence of political parties.

Mr. Kamal Djoumlatt

- Weak:
- 1) It is all wrong.

Mr. Ghassan Twaini

- Weak:
- 1) No freedom of elections, so no true representation.
 - 2) Members of Chamber of Deputies are agents of the Council of Ministers.
 - 3) Absence of balance between the three government bodies.
 - 4) Absence of political parties.

Dr. Abdalah Sa'ade

- Weak:
- 1) This system was enforced on the Lebanese and this did not allow for any good relations between people and rulers.
 - 2) The Council of Ministers was the power to determine results of elections and not the people, so the deputy becomes the agent of the cabinet.

Has the practice proved that Lebanon is tending more towards a Presidential system rather than a Parliamentary System?

- Mr. Maurice Gemayel Yes, there is a tendency towards a Presidential system because both the Chamber of Deputies and the Council of Ministers submit to the wishes of the President to guarantee their continuance.
- Mr. Alfred Nakkash No, the Chamber of Deputies has more authority, and this is a weak feature. The President must be allowed to appoint a council that will review all decisions enacted by the Chamber of Deputies.
- Mr. Abdalah Yafi One cannot give any negative or positive answer because such a tendency is determined to a great extent by the personality and character of the President and Prime Minister.
- Mr. Raymond Edde No, Lebanon is not tending towards a Presidential system. It practises equilibrium between the three government powers.
- Mr. Camille Chamoun Yes, Lebanon tends towards a Presidential system, because the President represents a more stable power.
- Mr. Bechara al-Khoury The system of government in Lebanon is based on the principle of separation and balance of powers.
- Mr. Adnan Hakim No, there is no tendency towards a Presidential system, But such a system is the best guarantee for democracy.
- Mr. Fuad Butros Yes, Lebanon tends towards a Presidential system, because the President represents a more stable power.
- Mr. Kamal Djoublatt _____
- Mr. Ghassan Twaini Yes, Lebanon has tended towards a Presidential system. This is due to:

Mr. Ghassan Twaini

- 1) Powers given to the President by the constitution.
- 2) Most of the Presidents belonged to blocs or parties.
- 3) Prime Ministers were weak.
- 4) All government employees submitted to the President's wishes because his power was more stable.

Dr. Abdallah Sa'ade

The Fact that the deputies feel indebted to the Executive body for their elections, makes them submissive to the wishes of the President.

What reforms do you recommend to improve the present

Parliamentary system in Lebanon?

Mr. Maurice Gemayel

To introduce any improvement the following things should be made:

- 1) To strengthen and develop the Ministries of Education and Information.
- 2) To work towards better social understanding among the different sects.
- 3) To keep the individual liberties.
- 4) To put a constitution that applies to Lebanon's political and sociological needs.

Mr. Alfred Nakkash

- 1) A council should be appointed to review all decisions made by the Chamber of Deputies.
- 2) Amend the electoral system, so that voting should be for individuals and not lists.
- 3) Fight confessionalism through educational system.

Mr. Abdalah Yafi

- 1) Political Parties, and a Council of Ministers from the majority party.
- 2) A new constitution that will apply to our sociological conditions.
- 3) Government schools, military service.
- 4) The government should work towards a better socialist economic system.

Mr. Raymond Edde

- 1) The government should guarantee better economic conditions.
- 2) The government should work toward establishing national unity through Government schools, military service and civil marriage.

Mr. Camille Chamoun

- 1) Work towards social security, without violating individual security.
- 2) Organization of political parties to get rid of this dominant individualistic feeling.
- 3) The starting point is education, mainly ethical education.

Mr. Bechara al-Khoury

The best improvements will come with the organization of political parties.

Mr. Adnan Hakim

- 1) To change the present constitution, through an elected constitutional body.
- 2) Newspapers as well as schools should be an educational factor which will help people realize their national duties.
- 3) A Presidential system is the best solution for all weaknesses.

Mr. Fuad Butros

- 1) Secularization of the State.
- 2) To come to an agreement about the meaning of Lebanon and Lebanese.
- 3) Government education and civil marriage.

Mr. Kamal Djoumblatt

- 1) To improve the Parliamentary system we should work to strengthen the social ties, through a socialist economic and educational system.
- 2) Change the constitution.
- 3) Fight confessionalism through political parties.

Mr. Ghassan Twaini

- 1) Political parties and party programs.
- 2) It is more important to change people in power than to change rules and constitutions.

Dr. Abdalah Sa'ade

The best solution is to work towards founding political parties.

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