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**PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
VOTING METHODS
INFORMATION GIVEN TO
NEW MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

AIMS

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

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

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

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

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

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

**CONSTITUTIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY
INFORMATION**

First Series - Thirty-sixth year

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TOPICAL DISCUSSION ON PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Introductory note

by Mr. Tardan, Secretary General of the Senate, France

The term public relations can be used to describe a range of professional activities whose purpose is to inform public opinion on the activities of all sorts of organisations. Without developing sophisticated strategies like those used by industrial or commercial firms towards consumers, the two Chambers have for some years aimed to improve their image and the understanding of their work among citizens.

In addition to the traditional ways that Parliament was already using to ensure coverage of its activities (public access to the chamber, reports of debates etc.) many new steps have been taken in the last ten or fifteen years. The subject of parliament and public relations can be examined under the following headings which cover the practice in the French parliament and will facilitate discussion:

1. Publication of reports of debates.
2. Visits by the public.
3. Publication of information.
4. Dealings with the press.
5. Relations with the broadcasting media.

There are similar structures for handling public relations in both Chambers of the French parliament. A member of the President's staff is particularly responsible for relations with the press and broadcasting media. In the Senate an information office (created in 1971) and in the National Assembly a press and public relations office (set up in 1982) are responsible for helping the work of journalists, making the work of the respective assemblies better known and replying to requests for information from the public. The Questures of the two Chambers deal with tickets to attend sittings, official ceremonies, welcoming parliamentary delegations from abroad, arranging visits by Members of each Chamber and allocating rooms for meetings with distinguished visitors. The personnel departments organise, together with other offices, entachments or training courses with the Chambers. The political groups have increasingly acquired press officers to deal with public relations of Members of parliament in their group. This is done, if necessary, in collaboration with the parliamentary officials when the Member who is engaged in some official activity such as for example announcing the publication of a committee report.

1. *Reports of debates held in public*

Publicity for parliamentary debates is first of all provided by the opportunity for any citizen to attend public sittings. Thus the first ten people in the queue for a sitting of the National Assembly of the Senate have priority for a seat even if they do not have a ticket for that sitting. The normal rule provides that members of the public should apply to a parliamentary office for a ticket to attend a particular debate. Two hundred seats are reserved for the public in this way in the galleries of the Senate.

This publicity is expanded by the reports of debates prepared by parliamentary staff. There are three such reports:

- (a) the summary bulletin gives, while the sitting is in progress, basic details of the debate and the speeches. It is sent out by telex and is particularly used by journalists who can thus report the sittings within the deadlines required by daily newspapers.
- (b) the summary report, is printed and distributed several hours after the end of the sitting. It is concerned with setting out the substance of the debates and is thus less condensed than the summary bulletin.
- (c) the full report of sittings produced by the shorthand service is published as the Official Journal. It has a much higher circulation than the other forms of report because there are more than 20 000 subscriptions for each edition (12 500 for the Senate debates and 9 500 for those in the National Assembly). The actual readership is obviously much greater in that the government offices, large industrial organisations and professional bodies have one subscription covering several people each.

It should also be noted that if the work of committees takes place behind closed doors some coverage is assured by the weekly edition of the bulletin of committees which gives a brief summary of the discussions in the committees prior to public sittings. Nevertheless the weekly nature of this publication is not suited to the needs of the press who cannot wait that long for basic information about the work of Parliament. That is why, on the initiative of the chairman of the relevant committee, press releases are sent out the same day as major hearings or the adoption of important reports.

2. *Visits by the public*

As a parliamentary assembly largely open to the public, the Senate sits in a national palace which is much visited by a wide range of people. The number of visitors to the Palais du Luxembourg is constantly increasing. In 1984, 38 755 visitors were recorded compared with 21 350 in 1977. The nature of the visits are also very varied. Most numerous are those by individuals carried out on the initiative of Senators (23 000 in 1984). These visitors are usually elected officials or important people from France or abroad invited by Members of the Upper Chamber who are treated as the special guests of the Senate. Traditionally there are also organised visits arranged by outside bodies. These account for about 5 000 visitors a year and principally take the form of a guide to the artistic and historic aspects of the places visited. Miscellaneous visits account for a further 8 000

visitors a year. These are arranged by cultural associations or education establishments and they also help to make the palace of Marie de Medicis and the Chamber that sits there better known.

This aspect of visits is important. Most of the visits referred to are the opportunity to learn about the purpose, powers and activities of the Upper Chamber. Thus each visitor to the Palace takes away a brochure on the Senate produced by the French Documentation Service, in which the first part describes the role of the Upper Chamber among the institutions of the Fifth Republic and the second points out the principal events in the history of France which occurred in the Palais de Luxembourg. The spectacular increase in visits during recent years is a sign of willingness to open up to the outside and the means of attaining that objective. It is in this spirit that various facilities have been made available in the last ten years. One of these is the free use of a basement meeting room with a capacity of 200 people where discussions and other events can be held by groups which satisfy the conditions of having the support of a Senator and not pursuing financial gain. This room was used by some 25,000 people in 1984 and is much appreciated by Members. It brings to the Palace people from all walks of life. Thus links are established and strengthened between the Senate and different movements, groups and associations.

Also included in the list of facilities available is the Senators restaurant where at the request of the Members of the Upper Chamber, banquets are frequently organised. Finally, it should be noted that the President of the Senate often puts the Salon du Petit Luxembourg (or the De Boffrand rooms) at the disposal of important figures or outside groups for splendid receptions.

Thus as a national Palace the Senate has little by little become established as a privileged place for national and international meetings. Its policy of welcoming visitors and opening up to outside interests is based on a public relations strategy decided by the President and Bureau of the Senate.

3. *Publication of information*

Publication of information is one preferred way in which the public relations policy of the Assemblies can be carried out, either in response to specific demands from outside bodies or individuals or by the circulation of documents designed to make the activities of Parliament better known.

(i) *Responses to requests for information.*

The services of both Chambers receive a large number of requests for information each day either by telephone or by letter. Most of the legislative staff are involved in providing information about the work on which they are engaged whether it is plenary sittings (Table Office), the work of committees (Committee Office) or parliamentary documents (Publications Office). Requests from the public for information are normally addressed to the information offices of the two Chambers who reply with information on all aspects of Parliament from the most general to the most specific. In the widest sense of public relations the information office of the Senate is often involved, for example, in providing documents for students or school children who are preparing studies of the Upper Chamber.

(ii) *Reception of students.*

The visits to the Palais Bourbon and the Palais du Luxembourg for groups of students are completed by Short description of the role of the two Chambers which includes the showing of a film. Arrangements are also made for officials from France and other countries to take part in a course or attachment in the parliamentary offices.

(iii) *Communication of written documents.*

A series of publications has been prepared to inform the outside world and particularly the opinion formers, the media and local organisation (which are of particular interest to the Senate) about the activities of parliament. These documents are distributed by the information service of the Chambers and have become more varied in recent years. The political groups also distribute their own publications.

(a) *Publications by the information service.*

The basic document is the weekly information bulletin which contains a diary of business in the Chamber and in committees, the activities of the numerous bodies which make up a parliamentary assembly (study groups, work groups, delegations, friendship groups etc.) and above all a brief analysis of the principal changes made to bills and motions debated in the plenary sittings. The Senate has adopted the system of quick printing and distribution for the information bulletin which is produced without a proof overnight on Friday and Saturday morning and arrives by Monday morning at its recipient who is thus informed in good time of the business for the forthcoming parliamentary week. At present it is sent to some 6 500 subscribers which naturally includes the press and broadcasting media, large companies, professional associations, local government and state bodies and also trade unions, teaching establishments, teachers and students.

In the Senate the weekly bulletin is supplemented by the free distribution of parliamentary documents. This is an important factor in the information policy of the Upper Chamber which sent out some 20 000 documents in this way last year. The last page of the weekly bulletin includes a list of Senate reports relevant to the subjects to be debated in the plenary during the forthcoming week. All the recipient of the bulletin has to do if he is interested in one or other document is to fill in the reply form and to send it in a prepaid envelope to the information service. This system has generated constant interest from recipients outside the Senat and many requests cannot be met. At the moment the National Assembly does not send out its reports and these can be bought from the Official Journal Office which issues parliamentary documents at a very modest price.

The annual bulletin.

Each Chamber produces a pamphlet setting out all its activities during the past calendar year: including legislative work in committees and in plenary session; scrutiny activities, whether in the form of oral questions taken with or without debate on topical matters; and the work of committees of enquiry and scrutiny. The annual bulletin of the Senate, of

which some 15,000 copies are printed, is sent out in particular to all the mayors of communities of more than 1,000 inhabitants.

Record of Senatorial elections.

Because of the particular voting system for Senate elections, an information document is published on the occasion of each new triennial term of the Upper Chamber. This includes a detailed note on the composition and method of election to the Senate. This paper is particularly appreciated by journalists who thus have a technical document to rely on when writing their articles.

(b) *A novel initiative by the Senate: the distribution of an educational brochure.*

Starting from the principle that only those subjects for which teachers have available specially prepared documents are well taught, the Senate decided to make secondary school pupils aware of their role. They thus preceded and then went along with the movement in favour of civil education in France. This education brochure was produced with the help of a communications agency specialising in education which in particular had available a team of lively presenters to introduce and distribute the document to teachers at conferences organised in schools. The brochure contains a general explanation and sections on significant facts, statistics and anecdotes, so it can be used by teachers as a basis for a course and also by pupils themselves for reading, essays and homework. 300,000 copies have already been distributed to teaching establishments and libraries of schools and colleges. In view of the strong demand for it from teachers, a new edition of 20 000 copies is currently being prepared, which illustrates the success of this approach to the teaching world. The National Assembly has recently decided to produce a similar brochure.

(c) *Distribution of a book on parliamentary law and procedure.*

In 1975 on the occasion of the centenary of the Upper Chamber, the bureau wanted to commission a book describing objectively the role of the Senate, its procedure, the nature of its Members and the extent of its powers. Edited by a group of Senate officials, this book is produced by a French Documentation Service and entitled 'To Know the Senate'. It was circulated widely on the occasion of the centenary celebrations. It is in effect a practical treatise on the law and procedure of parliament. It has been brought up to date for a second edition in 1984 and is sold through the French Documentation Service. The information office gives it without charge to teachers or students who are taking part in studies concerning parliament and to journalists who need a particularly detailed document on the working of the Senate.

(d) *Action by political groups.*

The parliamentary groups, (of which there are 4 in the Assembly and 6 in the Senate) also publish information bulletins designed to make their activities known among the electorate. These publications (some of which are weekly and others monthly) are naturally of a more political

nature than those previously described but they use the same technical facilities as the documents distributed by parliamentary offices. Since 1981 the 4 groups comprising the majority in the Senate have taken the initiative of publishing a weekly information letter called the 'S letter' designed to illustrate their united activity. It is sent to subscribers, mainly mayors, and 3\$ 000 copies are produced of each edition.

4. Dealings with the press.

An essential part of any public relations policy is specific action towards the press. This is done equally by the parliamentary offices and the political groups.

The information services of both Chambers were set up with the primary purposes of assisting the work of journalists and keeping them informed of parliamentary activities. This work is carried out under the direct control of the President of the Assembly whose instructions are transmitted by the Secretary General of the Assembly and the member of the President's staff charged with handling information policy. There are three basic types of activity: —

(i) *Issuing of press releases.*

Press releases are for the press the privileged means of finding out in good time about the work of committees. Any important hearing involving a Minister or public figure at a committee leads to the issue of a press release. Similarly in the National Assembly if a report is adopted by a committee a press release is issued. Unexpected events in the Chamber or, official decisions by the President of the Chamber are also brought to the attention of journalists in this manner.

(ii) *Organisation of press conferences and dinners.*

The information services organise press conferences when important reports are published, either on legislation or by committees of enquiry and scrutiny. Thus in 1984 18 press conferences were organised by the information office of the Senate. In order to prepare them, a list of press organisations and journalists according to their speciality is continually kept up-to-date and this enables invitations to be sent rapidly to the appropriate recipients. Press lunches which are more difficult to organise, and are used less often. Traditionally when the budget is being discussed, economic and financial journalists meet for lunch at the Senate at the invitation of the general rapporteur of the finance committee who sets out in some detail the economic situation of France at that time.

(iii) *Specific facilities for accredited journalists.*

Certain press organisations ask that one or more of their journalists should be accredited to the Assembly in order to work there permanently. This accreditation enables them to make use of several working facilities:

- access to the press room,
- access to the press gallery to enable journalists to follow debates in the Chamber (there are 50 such places in the Senate),

— receipt of all documents issued by the information services.

There are thus 130 journalists (including many correspondents from abroad) who are accredited to the Senate. The information services of both Chambers are constantly asked questions by these journalists and it is their role to give priority to such demands. In the National Assembly briefing documents are regularly sent to journalists in advance of any consideration of an important bill thus enabling them to obtain the necessary documentation for preparing their articles. These journalists are members of an association of parliamentary press and in the Senate President Poher regularly meets their representatives. He responds to their questions on the major political issues of each session and this informal and wide ranging discussion often enables the press to avoid false interpretation of the inevitable tensions which arise when highly controversial political topics are being discussed in the Chamber.

(iv) *The role of political groups.*

The parliamentary groups have realised the need to have their own service in so far as the work of the parliamentary information service is related to the institution rather than to the individual Members except for when they are officially representing the Chamber as the rapporteur or chairman of a standing committee or committee of inquiry. Thus each parliamentary group has a public relations office responsible for publicising the specifically political work of its Members, for example, their speeches in the plenary on a bill, the position of the group when a vote is taken on a text, tabling of motions to amend existing law etc. Besides the information bulletins mentioned above this activity by the parliamentary groups also includes press conferences, press lunches, the publication of the press release and the organisation of parliamentary study days to which the press is invited.



This combined action of the parliamentary staff and the political groups undeniably brings useful results. In 1984 the information service of the Upper Chamber recorded 25 600 press cuttings devoted to the Senate and Senators.

5. *Relations with the broadcasting media.*

In dealing with the broadcasting media public relations activity has to be constant because in France there is not (as there is in some other countries) a television channel devoted to the transmission of parliamentary debates. Only important discussions are broadcast, usually in part but occasionally in full. It has recently been proposed to dedicate closed circuit for the use of the Chambers and their groups.

(i) *The broadcasting of parliamentary debates.*

Broadcasting is a particularly efficient way of ensuring publicity of parliamentary debates. A 10% audience represents nearly 4 000 000 viewers, a figure on a completely different scale to the number who have subscriptions

to the Official Journal. Radio and television broadcasting of debates in Parliament is carried out under the control of the bureau of each Chamber. In the National Assembly a specific committee has been set up to deal with information problems and particularly those of the televising of parliamentary debates. The bureau of the Upper Chamber has in practice delegated its powers to the President of the Senate who, through a member of his staff, gives immediate permission for filming. Radio stations have booths in each Chamber to enable them to record debates and for some debates to broadcast live. Short extracts of debates are generally broadcast on television in the news and current affairs programmes. Certain important debates which are drawn to the attention of the television channels by the information services of both Chambers are broadcast in full. The sittings for topical questions (which are held weekly in the National Assembly and monthly in the Senate) are always transmitted live by one of the television channels.

(ii) *Video in the National Assembly.*

In 1982 the National Assembly introduced a system of three television cameras in the Chamber—one opposite the President's chair and the Speaker's rostrum and the others either side of the hemicycle—to record all the debates in colour on video cassettes. The recordings are given without charge to those who have spoken (or persons authorised by them) for their own purposes and to the radio and television organisations after a delay of two days after the end of the debate concerned. Other requests are dealt with on the authority of the committee responsible for information policy of the Chamber.

(iii) *Production of programmes about parliament.*

Following a commitment given by the government to the Senate during discussion of the budget in 1976 the regulations of the two national television organisations and the national radio body include an obligation to provide both Chambers of Parliament with programmes called 'Direct expression'. The programmes are produced under the auspices of the National Assembly and the Senate and are arranged in agreement with each Bureau by the national television stations concerned. The Bureau of the Senate set up a special committee which meets before each programme in order to determine its theme and the political groups which will take part. This committee is obliged to respect strict equality between the majority and opposition sides of the Senate. Every year each Chamber is allowed to use four programmes which last for 20 minutes and are shown at peak viewing hours (before the television news). These programmes attract on average an audience of 8% which represents a little more than 3 million viewers. To date the Senate has produced 48 television programmes of this nature and some 44 radio programmes. The 1982 law on television has added to this provision by allowing "direct expression" programmes to parliamentary groups. These groups are allowed 24 programmes a year each lasting 10 minutes and transmitted at the same time as the official programmes of the Chambers.

(iv) *Television courses.*

In order to train Senators in techniques which they have not all mastered perfectly, the Senate has organised introductory and refresher courses on television and radio technique for them. Each autumn 20 Senators follow a course organised by journalists with television experience to enable them to master interviews, televised statements and debates. Besides the fact that this initiative has enabled a number of Senators to discover a means of communication with which they were barely familiar, contacts have been established between Members and well-known journalists in the media and this has enabled each to appreciate better the interests of the other.

(v) *Showing offilms and video.*

The information services of both Chambers make available video cassettes and films on the activities of Parliament which includes the elections of Deputies and Senators, the organisation of the Chambers and the history of the buildings in which they meet. In the Senate these videos are shown to small groups of students and people on attachments as part of the visits that they are undertaking and to enable them better to understand the public sittings to which they will be listening. The Senate also has a 40 minute film made on the occasion of the centenary of the Upper Chamber in 1975 which sets out in detail its role and powers. The National Assembly is in the process of setting up a viewing room with a large capacity which will enable it to augment visits to the Palace with the showing of an educational film.

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This policy of informing the public is leading in the near future to various developments based on information technology. The two Chambers have recently developed the parliamentary information system which not only enables Members and parliamentary staff to use modern information systems, but also allows the public to be better informed. Databases dealing with parliamentary matters have been established. They include parliamentary questions and the replies to them, references to documents dealt with and examined, with the state of progress in examining each document, speeches by Members in public sitting etc. Already those involved can have access to these databases in the Senate and National Assembly a means of 'miniteF' terminals. These are likely to be of interest to government departments, local organisations lawyers, professional organisations etc. The Senate has produced a televised magazine which is available through 'teleteF'. This practice could be repeated with the 'minitel' terminals which already provide Members with the Orders of the Day (programme of business) of their Chamber.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Submitted by Mr. Ameller

(Secretary General of the French National Assembly)

Introduction: Bodies responsible for public relations

1. In the National Assembly the information tasks were shared between the Parliamentary Information Office and the Press and External Relations Office. The specific needs of parliamentary journalists led to the Bureau to set up in 1980 a special administrative unit which in 1982 became the Press and External Relations Office. This office was a single point of contact for journalists of the written press and television which they could approach both for administrative matters and for information while the Parliamentary Information Office concerned itself with providing briefing for deputies, groups, the government, government departments and the general public on parliamentary activities from files recording the work of the Assembly on all current legislation.

The responsibilities of the two offices differed therefore on two basic points: first, the destination of the information; and secondly, the method of collecting, using and distributing it (the Parliamentary Information Office was more systematic and detailed while the Press Office concentrated on brevity and speed).

Finally the Press and External Relations Office was responsible for preparing the decisions of the bureau and to carry out in collaboration with other offices the policy of the bureau on the Assembly's information policy notably towards television. The office therefore had responsibility in this area for initiating and coordinating under the control of the Bureau's sub-committee responsible for information policy for which it provided the secretariat.

2. Organisation of courses and attachments was generally dealt with by the Protocol Office.

With regard to public access to debates, about 300 places were reserved for the public in galleries of the National Assembly.

Publicity for the work of committees was ensured by a press release giving details of the work and votes of the committee which was published at the end of each committee meeting. For the National Assembly, visits to the building are as important as they are for the Senate and the number of visitors each year has reached nearly 50 000. In addition, from the end of 1985, an audio visual room, seating 100 people, will be available for the showing of a film on the history of the Palais Bourbon; this film will be followed by others on the role and working of the Assembly.

The National Assembly supplies documents to students and school pupils in the same way as does the Senate.

A number of subscriptions to the bulletin of the National Assembly is about 5,500. The education brochure on the National Assembly is being revised and will be sent out at the end of 1985 at a time when the new elections to the Assembly will provide teachers with a good opportunity for discussing this subject.

There are some 300 French journalists and 100 foreign journalists accredited to the Assembly. The president of the National Assembly is Honorary Joint President of the Association of Parliamentary Press and frequently meets the parliamentary journalists. With regard to production of broadcasts about parliament, this was until 1982 the responsibility of the political groups. Since then 12 television broadcasts have been produced under the authority of the sub-committee of the Bureau responsible for information policy which adopts an educational theme for each broadcast.

Deputies in the National Assembly also have training courses in television technique provided by the broadcasting corporations and organised through the political groups. Within the duration of one parliament or legislative term, each Deputy has the opportunity of taking part in such training.

MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN MEETING 1985 (EXTRACTS)
(OTTAWA - CANADA)

Topical discussion on parliament and public relations
Introduced by *Mr. Tardan* (France)

The *President* thanked Mr. Tardan, Secretary General of the French Senate, for having prepared an introductory note, which had been circulated in advance, and invited him to open the discussion.

Mr. Tardan said that he hoped to learn from the discussion about the experience of different parliaments in the field of public relations. Although industrial firms and commercial companies had for a long time used modern methods of communication to make their work better known, parliaments had only become involved in this activity relatively recently. It was because of its very existence as a political institution was threatened in 1969 that the French Senate tried to improve its image in public opinion. The National Assembly, whose role had not been challenged, only developed a public relations policy later. The Bureau of the Senate had introduced five measures: —

1. Publicity for debates was ensured, first of all, by the right of any citizen to attend a public sitting. 200 seats were reserved for the public in the Senate and 300 in the National Assembly. A report of the sittings was made by the parliamentary staff in three ways. First, a summary bulletin which was issued while the sitting was in progress and gave details of the main speeches; this was used principally by journalists. Secondly, the summary report which was in greater detail than the bulletin and was circulated several hours after the sitting. Thirdly, the full verbatim report was published in the official Journal between 1 and 3 days after the debate. There were more than 20 000 subscriptions to this publication. The work of committees was summarised in a committee bulletin and was also the subject of press notices issued after each important meeting.

2. Visits to the Palais de Luxembourg were now frequent and posed a number of accommodation problems. Thus additional work had been undertaken in the Senate to open a second meeting room for outside organisations and additional parking space. Between them the two chambers received some 100 000 visitors a year and this required the training of a large number of staff.

3. The publication of information covered a range of activities. Thus the parliamentary staffs had to deal daily with a large number of requests both written and by telephone. Staff had been specially trained for this task. In the Senate there was an information office and in the National Assembly two offices, one for the press and one for parliamentary information had been established. The range of documents published to keep the public informed about parliamentary activities included the weekly information bulletin of the Senate which was printed overnight on Friday and delivered on Monday morning to between 6 000 and 7 000

subscribers including major departments of government, large corporations, trades unions, universities etc. In addition to this, 15 000 copies of the annual bulletin, which sets out the activities of the Upper Chamber, were distributed. A further information booklet was published every 3 years when the Senate is elected. The Senators also produced, with the assistance of a specialised agency, an educational brochure for secondary schools. In addition a book on parliamentary law had been issued to coincide with the centenary of the Upper Chamber. Mr. Lyon, Honorary Secretary General of the National Assembly, had just published a supplement to the great treatise on parliamentary law of Eugene Pierre.

4. Particular attention had been paid to dealing with the written press. 300 French journalists and 100 representatives of foreign press accredited to the National Assembly and 150 and 80 respectively to the Senate. The journalists kept themselves informed through press releases, press conferences and special lunches. They made use of various working facilities including access to the galleries, press rooms, information dossier and direct communication links with their press agencies. These various facilities had borne fruit and the French press now paid much more attention to parliament. The Senate information service had recorded in 1984 25 600 press cuttings about the Senate and a much greater number about the National Assembly.

5. In France relations between parliament and television were closely controlled and the television channels operated under national direction. There was no regular broadcasting of proceedings except for the weekly Question Time in the National Assembly and the monthly Question Time in the Senate. Under a law passed in 1982, each Chamber had four broadcasts (lasting 20 minutes each) every year and the parliamentary groups had 24 broadcasts (lasting 10 minutes each). Since 1982 the debates in the National Assembly had been recorded and the cassettes were provided for deputies on request. The Senate had organised training courses in television technique for Senators, and these had been a great success. The information services of both Chambers also issued video cassettes and films on the work of parliament. The development of parliamentary information services such as 'Minitel' enabled not only Members of Parliament but also the public to be better informed.

The *President* thanked Mr. Tardan for his detailed presentation and invited other members to join in the discussion.

Mr. Serrano Alherca (Spain) said that public relations were extremely important for the Parliament in Spain because it was only recently that the country had returned to a democratic system. In the Senate, plenary sittings were held in public but committee meetings were not. Information files were regularly produced for the press who also had access to reports and other parliamentary documents. Brochures were distributed to people visiting the parliamentary building and a cartoon had been produced specially for children on the history and organisation of the Parliament. Relations with press and television were organised in a similar way to those in France. Press lunches were often arranged. Oral Question Time was televised. A special programme on Sunday afternoon gave coverage to the work of the Senate.

Mr. Schellknecht (Federal Republic of Germany) said that public relations in the Bundestag were similar to those in the French Parliament, but there were some additional features worth mentioning. Visitors to the building were given the opportunity to meet and talk to Members of Parliament after their tour of the building. They were also shown a film and offered a snack meal. Travel expenses could be reimbursed to young visitiros between the ages of 15 and 25 and to teachers and handicapped people. The Reichstag, which contained some historical exhibitions, was also much visited. Mr. Schellknecht said he would submit a note to Mr. Tardan on the detailed organisation of public relations in the Federal Republic of Germany's parliament (see Annex).

Mr. Cazorla Prieto (Spain) said that the organisation of public relations in the Congress of Deputies in Spain was very much similar to that in the Senate. The press was extremely important to the Chamber but its presence had been criticised for hampering the serious work, particularly of committees. There were 170 accredited journalists, 24 accredited newspapers, 18 radio and 5 television channels all competing to cover parliamentary affairs. 20 people were employed by the Congress of Deputies to organise visits the number of which increased each year (with 60 000 school children in the last year). In practice the major problem was the intrusion of political parties into this work. The Spanish Congress of Deputies did not have the same resources available as the French Senate. The Protocol Office organised visits and another office dealt with relations with the media. The television channels had not yet been able to reach an agreement with the Presidency of the Chamber about broadcasting Question Time.

Mr. Boulton (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom had followed a similar path to that of France and had responded to a lively public demand for information about what happened in parliament and how it worked. These descriptive matters were more the responsibility of the secretaries general who could not really become involved in more political aspects of public relations which occupied the attention of Members of Parliament. The House of Commons had a public information office with twelve full-time staff giving information directly to the public. There was also an Education Officer responsible for dealing with schools and for producing information documents for schoolchildren. One aspect of public relations in the British Parliament which had not been mentioned elsewhere was an organisation to foster mutual understanding between industrialists and businessmen on the one hand and Members of Parliament on the other. The Industry and Parliament Trust, a non-profit organisation, arranged attachments to industry for 25 days for Members of Parliament together with seminars and meetings on specific industrial and business topics. The Trust was run as a charity and financed by individual companies. It served a very useful purpose in ensuring a two-way flow of information between industry and Parliament.

Mr. Nguema-Mve (Gabon) commented on the practical and financial resources which the French Parliament devoted to public relations. He was interested in particular in the training given to the authors of various publications and parliamentary brochures and on the financing of such publications.

Mr. Sauvant (Switzerland) said he would like to have some assessment of the costs of sustaining such a public relations policy. He was also interested in

knowing who gave press conferences after a committee meeting. The speed with which summary reports were issued after sessions the French Parliament impressed him greatly. He wondered whether a Member of Parliament could amend the report of his speech.

Mr. Tardan gave details about the organisation of the parliamentary staff responsible for public relations. A total of 12 staff worked in the information division in the Senate and a larger number performed a similar function in the Assembly although they were divided into 2 offices. Training was carried out 'on the job' and outside special assistance was not used but staff obviously learnt from their direct dealings with journalists.

He could not put an exact figure on the total cost of maintaining these public relations because they included so many different activities but he did not think that the overall cost was too high. The problem of maintaining the political neutrality of information issued was the most delicate. In the case of press conferences, for example, officials confined themselves to making the organisational arrangements and did not actually speak during the conference. As far as the summary reports of debates were concerned, the speed of their publications depended above all on the length of the debates. If the sitting was sufficiently short, the report was printed the following evening. Members were allowed to make editorial changes to the text of their speech recorded by the reporters, but they had to produce their changes within 3 or 4 hours of the speech. If they wished they could alter the substance of their speech by informing the Editor and the Secretary General who would refer the matter to the President, but such instances were very rare.

Mr. Tumangan (Philippines) said that he would submit a written note to Mr. Tardan on the organisation of public relations in the Philippine Parliament which was similar to that of the French Senate (see Annex). Public relations were particularly important to enable the public to better understand certain aspects of political institutions. They could also be used to improve the image of politicians.

Mr. Sherbini (Egypt) said the organisation of public relations in the Egyptian Parliament was similar to that in the French Senate but the resources allocated to them were smaller. In particular, visits to the parliamentary buildings were regarded as less important.

Mr. Sugiarto (Indonesia) said he would like further details of the announcements which were made after the meetings which had been held behind closed doors.

Mr. Yatomi (Japan) said that in the Japanese Diet the text of debates was published in the Official Gazette which could be bought by any citizen and was available in libraries. An office under the control of the Secretary General was responsible in the Chamber of Representatives for public relations. Visits to the building were conducted in Japanese and in English and in 1984 940 000 people visited the Chamber of Representatives and 230 000 the Chamber of Councillors. A parliamentary museum contained a series of documents on parliament and its history and arranges special exhibitions. In 1984 it had had 140 000 visitors. Press

rooms were available for journalists. Parliamentary activities were well reported in the national newspapers and a public television channel broadcast directly the opening of each session of the Diet as well as the presentation of the budget. Certain private television channels also broadcast the proceedings of the two Chambers. 3/2 million viewers had watched the last debate on the general policy of the government. The channel NH4 had a programme every Sunday of debates in which the main representatives of the political groups took part.

Mr. Namwat (Thailand) said that public relations were perhaps even more important for a parliament in a developing country. He wondered whether a national competition which had been organised in Thailand on the parliamentary institutions could be considered as a form of public relations for parliament. Among the other public relations activities organised by the Thai Parliament for visits (for 150 000 people a year) and occasional exhibitions.

Mr. Tardan replied that a competition on parliamentary institutions was certainly an excellent way of making Parliament better understood among school-children. The French Parliament had considered that at one stage but had decided instead to issue a brochure for schools. He said in response to Mr. Sugiarto that although closed meetings of committees were envisaged under the rules of the two French Chambers they actually took place fairly rarely: the last secret committee meeting had been held 45 years previously. The record of debates had been sent to the archives and could be published after 30 years. In the end it was the bureaux of the two Assemblies which were responsible for deciding whether to publish debates. Committee meetings were a source of particular media attention and gave rise to their own press conferences and press notices. In reply to Mr. Serrano Alberca, Mr. Tardan said that the brochure produced for children in France did not take the form of a cartoon strip, but it included lots of simple anecdotes on parliamentary life which would interest children around 15 years of age. He concluded by emphasising once again the importance of the remark made by Mr. Cazorla Prieto on the political difficulties that can arise over public relations.

The *President* thanked Mr. Tardan for having replied to the questions raised in the discussion. Several interesting ideas had emerged during the discussion which showed that it was of great interest to Secretaries General as well as to Members of Parliament.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES OF THE JAPANESE NATIONAL DIET

I. Public Relations Activities of Both Houses:

A. Distribution of Minutes:

Minutes of plenary sessions of both Houses are carried in the Official Gazette, copies of which are distributed to various organs and can also be bought at each Government Publications Center. Copies of records of committee meetings in the House of Representatives can be obtained through Members of the House. In the House of Councillors, copies of records of committee meetings are available at the Secretariat of the House. Copies of the minutes of plenary sittings and records of committee meetings in both Houses can also be inspected at the National Diet Library. (For information: The number of copies of minutes of the plenary sittings distributed or sold in 1984 was 315 719 for the House of Representatives, and 217 794 for the House of Councillors.)

B. Telephone Inquiries:

In the House of Representatives, such inquiries are answered by the competent departments and divisions of the Secretariat, while in the House of Councillors, replies are given by the Public Information Office. (A total of 1 448 inquiries were made to the Public Information Office of the House of Councillors in the course of 1984.)

C. Tour of Diet Compounds:

Tours of facilities in the compounds of both houses are carried out with guards as guides. On each occasion, copies of the brochure titled "The National Diet of Japan" (in Japanese or English) are given free to all visitors. (The number of visitors touring the Diet facilities in 1984 was 936 361 for the House of Representatives, and 224 232 for the House of Councillors.)

D. Parliamentary Museum:

As a facility affiliated with the House of Representatives, the Parliamentary Museum is engaged in collecting and exhibiting various materials concerning domestic and foreign parliamentary politics to inform and interest the general public. Besides the regular exhibition service, a special exhibition is held annually with selected items illustrating events in Japan's parliamentary history as its main theme. (The number of visitors to the Museum in 1984 was 133 994.)

PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG

I. General survey

In the wake of the parliamentary reform, a Press and Information Centre placed directly under the Secretary-General of the German Bundestag was set up in the Bundestag Administration in 1970. The Press and Information Centre consists of four sections, namely: Press, Radio, Television; Parliamentary Publications; Public Relations; Visitors' Service of the Bundestag and of the Reichstag, with a total staff of 44 employees and civil servants.

II. Functions

A. *Press, Radio, Television Section*

- (a) Continuous provision of information to the press, radio and television on current parliamentary affairs by the following means:
 - the press release "Mitteilungen aus dem Bundestag" (News from the Bundestag), (1984: 111 issues), circulation: 1 000-1 500 copies, distributed to 750 German and foreign correspondents in Bonn and elsewhere;
 - information by telephone and in writing;
 - organisation of press conferences;
 - organisation of interviews with Members from the various parliamentary groups, and briefings with German and foreign journalists.
- (b) Continuous provision of information to the members of the Presidium on current domestic and foreign affairs.
- (c) Bulletin boards with the most important news agenda reports at four different places in Parliament for the information of Members in weeks of sittings.
- (d) Looking after German and foreign press, radio and television journalists during their work in Parliament.
- (e) Picture service for the press and television with photographs of all 520 Members and all parliamentary facilities (total stock in 1984: 12 000 photographs).
- (f) Internal television recording and projection service, by means of which all topical political programmes can be watched, with advance notice in writing.
- (g) Telephone announcement service on the course of plenary sittings (for Members, etc., and for press, radio and television).

B. *Parliamentary Publications Sections*

Continuous provision of information to the public on current parliamentary affairs, especially as regard the Bundestag committees, through the following publications:

- The news-agency style parliamentary press release "Heute im Bundestag" ("hib") (Today in the Bundestag), which appears up to three times daily — 1984: 278 issues with 1968 news items — with a supplement "Zur Tagesordnung" (Information on the Agenda) in weeks of sittings; circulation: 2 800 copies distributed to Members of the Bundestag, press, radio and TV correspondents in Bonn, the Bundestag Administration, parliamentary groups, Members' assistants, the Bundesrat, the federal ministries, the representations of the Länder in Bonn, foreign diplomatic missions, visitors to the Bundestag, and others.
- The weekly parliamentary publication "Woche im Bundestag" ("wib") (The Week in the Bundestag), which, arranged according to subject-matter areas, summarizes and supplements the news items published in "hib"; (1984: 23 issues with 3 390 news items); circulation: 18 000 copies distributed to subscribers of "hib", as well as to the central editorial departments of radio and television stations, newspapers and periodicals, particularly specialised journals, throughout the Federal Republic; also to the various party organisations, to trade unions, universities, employers' associations, the Federal Armed Forces, foreign parliaments, Land governments, Land parliaments, libraries, and interested individuals.

C. *Public Relations Section*

By means of a wide variety of brochures, information material, compilations, exhibitions, films, slide shows with a synchronised commentary and through special events, this section continuously informs the public on all important events in the Bundestag and on its special procedure and functioning. Special distribution lists help ensure that the greatest possible number of political, social and professional groups is reached. This applies in particular to parliamentarians and officials involved in politics at federal, Land and local level as well as to the press, radio and television, to federal and Land agencies, to diplomatic missions, associations from trade and industry and professional bodies, schools, visitors to the Bundestag and to the Reichstag building, and to individual interested citizens (1984: 74 000 requests for information and written material).

These publications have a circulation of between 10 000 and 1 500 000 copies. The Public Relations Section performs the following functions, inter alia:

- (a) The production, publication and distribution, at regular intervals, of the following publications:
 - the series "Bundestag von a-z" (The Bundestag from A to Z) a brief description of parliamentary issues, terms and institutions;
 - the series "Zur Sache" (Issues), dealing with the subject-matter of parliamentary deliberations (excerpts from debates, public hearings, announcement, reports by study commissions);

- the magazine "Parlament aktuell" (Parliament Today), a brief survey of the functions and the procedure of Parliament;
 - the wall newspaper "Forum Parlament" (Parliament — the Forum), describing the issues dealt with by Parliament and parliamentary proceedings;
 - "Der Reichstag — Bilder zur deutschen Parlamentsgeschichte" (The Reichstag — Scenes of German Parliamentary History), a brochure on the history of the Reichstag;
 - the publication "Bundestagsreport" (Bundestag Report), with special information on the work of Parliament especially in the committees, for specialised periodicals;
 - the pull-out pamphlet "Weg der Gesetzgebung" (The Passage of Legislation), describing legislative procedure;
 - "Im Plenarsaal" (In the Plenary Chamber), a brochure for the information of visitors to the German Bundestag;
 - "Fragen an die Deutsche Geschichte" (Questions on German History), a catalogue relating to the exhibition of the same name in the Reichstag building in Berlin;
 - "Chronik" (Chronicle), describing the events of an electoral term of the German bundestag in chronological order;
 - "Maternseiten" (Matrix Pages), newspaper pages prepared for local newspapers, advertising papers, etc., with reports on the current activities of the Bundestag;
 - the information sheet "Plenum" (The Plenary), which is identical with the texts of the matrix pages for editorial departments which, because of the format of their newspapers, cannot use the matrix pages.
- (b) The production, publication and distribution, at irregular intervals, of the following publications:
- The seating plan of the German Bundestag, an illustrated, multi-coloured sheet (in alphabetical order and according to seat numbers).
 - "Die Bundesversammlung" (The Federal convention), a survey of the election of the Federal Presidents since 1949.
 - The brochure "Der Deutsche Bundestag" (The German Bundestag), with articles on the history of the parliamentary system in Germany, on the Bundestag Administration, and on the work of the parliamentary groups.
 - "Datenhandbuch zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bundestages 1949-1982" (Handbook on the History of the German Bundestag from 1949 to 1982).
 - "Der Bundestag im Verfassungsgefüge der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" (The bundestag in the Constitutional Structure of the Federal Republic of Germany), a collection of articles by Members of Parliament, scientists, politicians and publicists.
 - The illustrated volume "Portrait eines Parlaments" ("Portrait of a Parlia-

ment"), a photographic review of the 36-year history of the German Bundestag with brief explanatory notes.

- Exhibitions: From 1978 to 1980, a travelling photographic exhibition on the Bundestag that has been shown in almost all constituencies; since 1982, participation in consumer fairs with two information stands and talks between local Members of Parliament and visitors to the fair.
 - Competitions, such as the 1979 competition for school pupils "All state authority emanates from the people", and the 1981 poster competition for commercial and visual artists.
- (c) — The production, presentation and lending of films and slide shows with a synchronised commentary on the Bundestag. Currently available: 7 films, 1 cartoon film, 5 slide shows with a synchronised commentary.
- (d) Purchase of literature relating to Parliament.

D. *Visitors' Service of the Bundestag and of the Reichstag*

- (a) Looking after visitors to the Bundestag in the following ways:
- attending plenary sittings (1984: 68,000 participants);
 - tour of the plenary chamber on days on which Parliament is not in session, explanation of the function and procedure of the Bundestag, followed by a film and a discussion with Members from the various parliamentary groups (1984: 26 000 participants);
 - tour of the plenary chamber (1984: 131 000 visitors);
 - half-day or full-day programmes for multipliers (parliamentary seminars) (1984: 60);
 - providing visitors with information material and a special visitor's badge;
 - special events (for example Question Time for young people in the plenary chamber).
- (b) Looking after visitors to the Reichstag building in Berlin by the following means:
- guided tour of the building (1984: 137 000 persons);
 - guided tour of the historical exhibition "Fragen an die deutsche Geschichte" (Questions on German History) (1984: 570 000 persons);
 - provision of information material and a special visitor's badge.

PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

I. Publication of Reports of Debates

In the Philippines, the following documents and reports are published:

1. *Spot Report*: This is a brief summary of the proceedings in a committee meeting or public hearing, prepared by the Committee Affairs Bureau immediately after the meeting or hearing primarily for the use of the leadership of the legislature and the media representatives accredited to the National Assembly;
2. *Committee Bulletin*: This is a report of the proceedings in the different committees, published by the Committee Affairs Bureau on a weekly basis primarily for the benefit of Members of Parliament and media representatives;
3. *Fact Sheet*: This is a backgrounder on important bills submitted for the consideration of the National Assembly, prepared by the Committee Affairs Bureau twice a month for the benefit of Members of Parliament and media representatives;
4. *Committee Quarterly*: This quarterly publication, which contains the status of bills under consideration of the National Assembly, as well as articles and position papers on the major bills and resolutions under consideration of the National Assembly is prepared by the committee Affairs Bureau for the benefit of Members of Parliament, the media representatives and the general public;
5. *Committee Report*: This document which reflects the action of a Committee on a bill is prepared primarily for the consideration of the entire membership of the National Assembly, but copies of it are disseminated for media, representatives.
6. *History of Bills*: This publication, which contains the history of bills and resolutions which were acted upon by the National Assembly—from first reading to final promulgation of laws and the adoption of resolutions—is issued once a year by the Plenary Affairs Bureau for the benefit of Members of Parliament and media representatives;
7. *Journal*: This is a succinct account of the proceedings during plenary sessions, published daily by the Plenary Affairs Bureau for the use of Members of Parliament, media representatives, and the general public;
8. *Record of the Batasang*: This is a verbatim record of the daily proceedings during plenary sessions, published daily by the Plenary Affairs Bureau and

printed in book form at the end of the year, for use of Members of Parliament, media representatives and the general public; and

9. *Bill Abstract*: This is a brief digest of a bill, prepared by the Plenary Affairs Bureau immediately upon the filing of the bill, for the benefit of Members of Parliament and media representatives.

II. Access by the Public

The galleries of the Plenary Hall are open to the public during sessions. We have over 1 000 seats in the galleries. At the inaugural ceremonies of the Parliament every fourth Monday of the year, the galleries are filled up by special guests and members of the general public.

From time to time, student groups, socio-civic organisations, and government agencies visit the Parliament. In order to ensure that the facilities are prepared for the public, requests for such visits are made to the Public Relations Bureau, which schedules tours and briefings, complete with audio-visual presentations and dissemination of booklets and brochures on the National Assembly.

III. Dealings with Media

In the National Assembly, we have accredited two groups of media representatives, namely the *Batasang Press Corps* and the *Parliamentary Press Corps*.

We have a Public Information Service which prepares press releases and maintains a Media Centre when facilities and office supplies are made available to media representatives. They also organise press conferences and meetings between media representatives and Members of Parliament. At present, they also coordinate weekly breakfast meetings between the two groups, where Ministers and other prominent officials of the Government are invited to shed information on current national issues.

The Committee meetings/public hearings and the plenary sessions are occasionally covered by television and radio. We have about four television stations and five radio stations covering these sittings.

Members of Parliament are often guests to such popular talk shows in television as "Frontline", "Interaction", "Viewpoint", "Tell the People", and "Inquiry". For more than two years, a television show entitled "Ang Batasan" served as a regular forum for the discussion of important measures pending before the National Assembly.

The National Government is not without participation in the public relations work of the Parliament. Through the National Media Production Centre, important government bills are given prominent publicity in the press, radio and television for the information of the general public.

In addition, political groups and individual Members of parliament have their own public relations programs which all redound to the development of a better understanding of the work of Parliament.