



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECOND SESSION

THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

Bill 152

An Act respecting the National Committee on Regions

Introduction

**Introduced by
Mr Rémy Trudel
Minister of Regions**

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

This bill establishes the National Committee on Regions. Instituted under the authority of the National Assembly, the Committee will operate under terms of reference requiring it primarily to examine and analyze issues associated with regional development and to make recommendations in that respect. It may also examine special matters referred to it by the National Assembly or do so on its own initiative.

The bill provides that the Committee is to be composed of twelve permanent members and of five temporary members who are Members of the National Assembly. The National Assembly may increase membership in the Committee by not more than seven additional permanent members whom the Assembly considers representative of the sectors or areas concerned by the Committee's terms of reference. Membership may also be increased by the Committee by not more than five additional members chosen for their competence, expertise and knowledge of the field being considered.

The bill contains a chapter on the organization of the Committee providing for measures that pertain to the chairship, secretariat and operation of the Committee and expenditure management.

Lastly, the bill contains certain final provisions.

Bill 152

AN ACT RESPECTING THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON REGIONS

WHEREAS Québec consists of seventeen regions each having its own specific features and characteristics ;

WHEREAS at the Rendez-vous national des régions, the Government expressed its will to establish, under the authority of the National Assembly, the National Committee on Regions ;

WHEREAS it is expedient to give effect to that will in order to recognize the importance of the regions in our democratic institutions ;

THE PARLIAMENT OF QUÉBEC ENACTS AS FOLLOWS :

CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHMENT AND ORDERS OF REFERENCE

1. The National Committee on Regions is hereby established under the authority of the National Assembly.

2. The Committee shall examine and analyze any issue concerning problems related to regional development in Québec, and shall make any appropriate recommendations to the National Assembly, the Government and the Minister of Regions or to any other minister according to the nature of the recommendation.

For that purpose, the Committee may in particular

(1) examine decentralization or regionalization projects and see that a national perspective is maintained throughout the implementation process ;

(2) analyze the proposals from regional representatives regarding the establishment of interdepartmental regional resource envelopes and make recommendations in that respect ;

(3) ensure that the resource distribution method allows equitable sharing among regions ;

(4) periodically hear the representatives of the regional development councils referred to in the Act respecting the Ministère des Régions (R.S.Q., chapter M-25.001) to analyze the results of the actions they have taken and of the carrying out of the mandates entrusted to them; and

(5) study mechanisms that would be most conducive to ensuring better regional representation within democratic institutions.

3. The National Assembly may refer any matter to the Committee for examination. Such reference may be ordered on a motion by the Government House Leader, which motion cannot be amended but may be discussed in a limited debate that shall not exceed one hour.

4. The Committee shall have power, on motion by one of its members, to initiate proceedings with respect to regional development; but no such motion shall be deemed carried unless a majority from each parliamentary group has voted in its favour.

CHAPTER II

COMPOSITION

5. The Committee shall consist of twelve permanent members and five temporary members.

The members are Members of the National Assembly who shall be appointed according to the following rules:

(1) for permanent members,

(a) seven Members from the Government party, appointed by the Prime Minister;

(b) five Members from the Official Opposition party or, where there are several opposition parties, four from the Official Opposition party and one from the party among the remaining opposition parties having obtained the greatest number of seats or, in case of equality of seats, from that having obtained the greatest number of valid votes. Such Members are appointed by the Leader of the Official Opposition and, where applicable, by the Leader of the other opposition party;

(2) for temporary members,

(a) three Members designated by the Whip of the Government party;

(b) two Members designated by the Whip of the Official Opposition party.

The chair and the vice-chair of the Committee shall be designated by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition, respectively, from among the permanent members.

6. Permanent members are appointed for two years. Temporary members are designated for the duration of the consideration of a particular matter or for a single meeting.

7. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Official Opposition and, where applicable, the Leader of the other opposition party shall send a written notice to the President of the National Assembly indicating the name of the members whose appointment or designation is under their authority.

8. The National Assembly may increase the membership of the Committee and, on a motion presented by the Prime Minister carried by at least two-thirds of the Members of the National Assembly, appoint not more than seven additional permanent members whom it considers representative of the sectors concerned by the Committee's orders of reference. The additional permanent members are not Members of the National Assembly.

The additional permanent members are appointed for a period of not more than two years.

9. The Committee may also increase its membership and, on a motion by one of its members carried by a majority of members from each parliamentary group, appoint a maximum of five additional members chosen on the basis of their competence, expertise and knowledge of the field being considered. The additional members are not Members of the National Assembly.

Additional members are appointed for the duration of the examination of a matter or for a single meeting.

10. The temporary members and additional members referred to in section 9 participate in the proceedings of the Committee but are not entitled to vote.

11. The Committee members who are Members of the National Assembly may be replaced for any meeting or part of a meeting by a Member, including a minister.

At the beginning of each meeting or each part of a meeting, the secretary of the Committee shall announce the substitutions of which the secretary has been informed by the Whip of each party or by the party's representative, as the case may be.

12. Any vacancy among the members of the Committee shall be filled and any permanent substitution in the membership shall be made according to the rules provided for the appointment of the member to be replaced. The same applies to the designation of the chair and the vice-chair of the Committee.

13. The chair, the vice-chair and the members of the Committee shall receive the indemnities and allowances determined by a regulation of the Office of the National Assembly.

14. When sitting on the Committee, a Member of the National Assembly has the same rights, privileges and immunities and the same obligations as if the Member were sitting on a parliamentary committee.

No other member of the Committee may be prosecuted for an act done in good faith in the performance of the member's duties.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION

DIVISION I

CHAIRSHIP AND SECRETARIAT

15. The chair of the Committee shall establish the staffing plan and expenditure estimates of the Committee and the Committee proceedings plan. The chair shall authorize requests made to the Office of the National Assembly.

The chair shall call and preside at meetings of the Committee. The chair shall participate in the deliberations, direct the proceedings and see to the proper carrying out of decisions of the Committee, and exercise the right to vote.

16. For the purposes of this chapter, the chair exercises the powers and duties conferred on a chief executive officer. The chair may, notwithstanding any legislative provision, delegate such powers and duties to any person the chair designates.

17. If the chair of the Committee is absent or unable to act, or at the chair's request, the vice-chair of the Committee shall replace the chair and perform the duties of chair.

18. In carrying out its orders of reference, the Committee shall be assisted by a secretariat.

The secretary of the Committee shall be appointed by the chair.

19. On the authorization of the chair, the secretary may retain the services of any person for the secretariat of the Committee.

20. The remuneration and other conditions of employment of the personnel of the secretariat shall be determined by the Office of the National Assembly.

21. Under the exclusive authority of the chair, the secretary of the Committee shall direct the personnel, administer the day-to-day business of the Committee and exercise the other functions assigned by the chair.

22. The secretary shall attend the meetings of the Committee.

The secretary shall see to the preparation of the minutes and may attest to their authenticity. The secretary shall have custody of the records of the Committee.

23. If the secretary is unable to act, any other person designated by the chair shall replace the secretary and perform the secretary's duties.

24. The President and Secretary General of the National Assembly shall provide the secretariat of the Committee with all assistance required for the carrying out of its orders of reference, including additional personnel.

DIVISION II

OPERATION

25. The Committee may, for the carrying out of its orders of reference, commission studies and hold consultations considered necessary, and hear any interested person or body.

26. The Committee may sit at any place in Québec.

27. The Committee shall sit in public, except in the case of a working session or of a meeting held *in camera*.

28. The public meetings of the Committee may be broadcast via television and recorded under the authority of the President of the National Assembly. The proceedings shall be recorded in the *Journal des débats*.

The manner in which meetings and proceedings are to be produced, broadcast and recorded shall be determined by the Office of the National Assembly.

29. One-third of the members who exercise a voting right is a quorum of the Committee. If a subcommittee is formed, a majority of the members who exercise a voting right is a quorum.

30. The proceedings of the Committee shall be protected from all interference to the same extent as the proceedings of the National Assembly are so protected.

DIVISION III

MANAGEMENT OF EXPENDITURES

31. The Committee may make any expenditure necessary for the carrying out of its orders of reference. Its expenditures form part of the expenditures of the National Assembly.

The management of the Committee's financial resources, including its expenditures, is governed by the same rules as those of the National Assembly.

32. The estimated expenditures of the Committee shall be approved by the Office of the National Assembly.

CHAPTER IV

FINAL PROVISIONS

33. Except where inconsistent with this Act, the provisions that apply to standing parliamentary committees, their members and their personnel in the Act respecting the National Assembly (R.S.Q., chapter A-23.1), the Standing Orders of the National Assembly, the rules for the conduct of proceedings concerning committees, and the regulations, rules and decisions adopted by the Office of the National Assembly apply, with the necessary modifications, to the Committee.

However, section 12 of the Act respecting the National Assembly does not apply to the Committee as regards the composition of subcommittees.

In addition, the Office of the National Assembly may, by regulation, amend for the purposes of this Act the regulations and rules it has adopted in relation to the management and expenditures of the Assembly, and exercise its power under the second paragraph of section 110 of the Act respecting the National Assembly. Such a regulation may, if it so provides, have effect from any date not prior to (*insert here the date of assent to this Act*).

34. For the purposes of sections 8, 48 to 50 and 110.2 of the Act respecting the National Assembly and for the purposes of the Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information (R.S.Q., chapter A-2.1) and the Archives Act (R.S.Q., chapter A-21.1), the Committee is considered to be a standing committee of the Assembly.

35. The term of office of the members of the Committee shall end on the date of dissolution of the National Assembly.

36. The payment of allowances and indemnities to a Member pursuant to this Act does not constitute an advantage or remuneration inconsistent with the function of Member and is considered to be a payment referred to in section 73 of the Act respecting the National Assembly.

[[**37.** The sums required for the purposes of this Act are taken out of the consolidated revenue fund.]]

38. This Act comes into force on (*insert here the date of assent to this Act*), except section 8 which comes into force on the date to be fixed by the Government.