



# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

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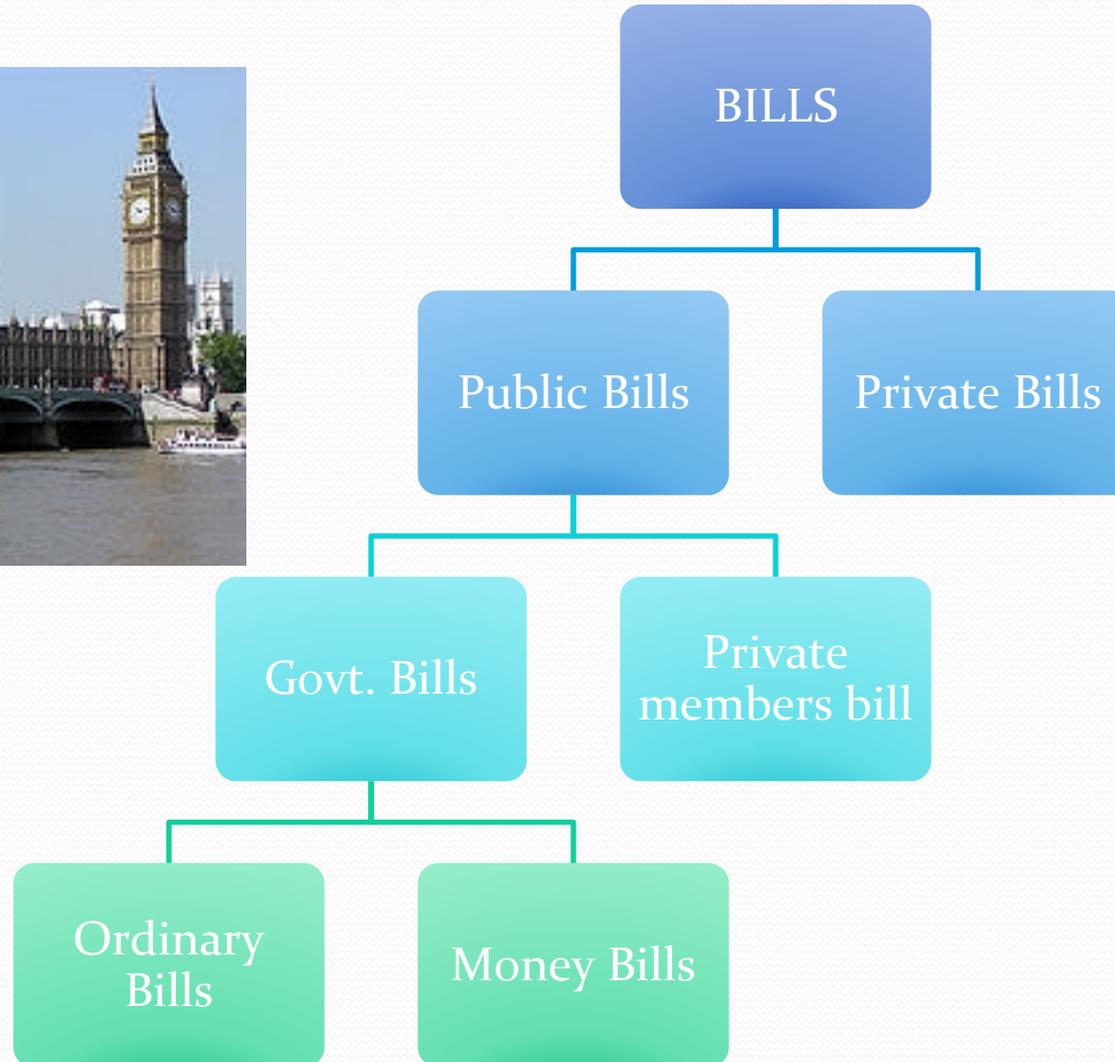
# Introduction:

- The primary task of the Parliament is that of enacting laws.
- In the legislative process every bill must undergo five stages, including the 3 Reading stages before it is presented to the King for his approval.
- The two houses of the parliament are involved in the legislative process.

# What is a Bill?

- A bill is a document containing proposals for legislation.
- Mainly speaking there are two types of bills- 1) Public bills & 2) Private bills.

# Classification of Bills:



# Kinds of Bill:

- 1. Public Bills:** these are the legislative measures having general application or applicable to the nation as a whole and affects the interest of all persons.
- 2. Private Bills:** these are the ones which deal with private matters such as altering the law of particular locality or affecting the interest of only a section of society.
- 3. Government Bills:** these are also known as treasury Bills or Official Bills, introduced by a minister. These may be divided into money bills and ordinary bills.

# Kinds of Bills contd.....

4. **Private Members Bill:** When a bill is introduced by a ordinary or a private member (who do not hold a ministerial position) it is called private member bill.
5. **Money Bills:** these are related to money matters and these must be introduced in the lower House first.
6. **Ordinary Bills:** non- money bills are called as ordinary bills and these can originate in either House of the Parliament.

# Stages in the legislative process:

- A bill becomes an Act of the Parliament only when it undergoes successfully five stages in each Houses followed by the approval of the King.
- Following are the important stages involved in the life of a bill, such as -

# 1. Introduction of the Bill:

- First stage is the introduction of the bill, called as First Reading.
- The Speaker calls upon the mover of the bill to introduce the bill formally.
- The mover stands up and reads out the title & important passages of the bill.
- There is usually no debate on the bill at this stage.
- The concerned minister indicates the date for Second Reading.
- Finally the bill is printed & circulated for Second reading.

## 2. Second Reading:

- This is the second stage & the most important and crucial stage in the life of a bill.
- A full scale debate takes place lasting for 3 days.
- Here, the fundamental principles of the bill are discussed in detail.
- But the bill is not discussed word by word and clause by clause.
- At the end voting takes place – a bill may be accepted/rejected/amended.
- A private members bill dies at this stage if not backed by the cabinet.
- If the Government bill is rejected in the second stage, the government has to resign.

# 3. Committee Stage:

- After the basic principles of the bill have been agreed upon in the House, it is referred to one of the committee in the House for a detail discussion, amendment & report.
- The committee is not concerned with the principles of the bill but merely with its form.
- It discuss the bill word by word & clause by clause in order to make the bill technically a perfect bill & to remove its shortcomings.
- The committee can suggest amendments to the bill if needed & report the bill to the House.

## 4. Report Stage:

- The committee present the report to the House along with the changes made in it.
- But the House is free to accept or reject these amendments suggested by the committee.
- The House may send back the bill to the committee with its own recommendations.
- The final form in which the bill has to be passed rest entirely with the House.
- In order to save the time of he House certain techniques called **Closure Motions** are adopted.

# Closure Motions:

- **1. Simple Closure:**
- **2. Kangaroo Closure:** better known as skip over process. Only important clauses of the bill is discussed & other parts are passed without any debate.
- **3. Guillotine Closure:** when the time for debate is over guillotine falls, the unfinished parts of the bill are also passed without any debates.

# 5. Third Reading Stage:

- The last stage in the life of the bill in the House where it is originated.
- At this stage, no amendments can be made except verbal changes.
- Third reading is only a formality.
- This is the last opportunity for the opposition party, as the bill is taken up for last discussion.
- But at this stage no substantial amendment can be moved.
- After the bill is approved in the House by majority votes, the speaker put his signature and the bill is sent to the upper house for its consideration.

# 6. Consideration By The Second House:

- After the bill is passed by one House it goes to the other House, where it passes through all stages over again.
- If the House of Lords also agrees with the bill, then it will be sent to the King for his approval.
- The House of Lords may also make amendments to the bill & the House of Commons may approve of it.
- However, in case of disagreement between the two Houses, the bill will be dead for a session.
- But if the House of Commons passes it again after one year (between the second reading of it in the first session and the third reading of it in the second session) irrespective of it whether the Lords agrees to it or not, the bill will be sent for the Royal assent.



# 7. Royal Assent:

- After the bill is passed in both the houses, it will be sent to the King for his approval.
- After the royal assent the bill becomes an Act.
- This is only a formality, for convention in England is that the King never vetoes a bill.
- Thus, the bill becomes a law or an act and entered into the statute book.
- Two copies of the Act will be printed and deposited in the Rolls of Parliament and in the Public Record Office.

