Nam:_____ Date:_____ Grade: _____

Social Studies

Topic: BJC Review – Government – How are Laws Made

Brief Notes: HOW ARE LAWS MADE IN THE BAHAMAS

When the government decides a new law is needed the Minister whose portfolio the law effects discusses it with the government lawyers. These lawyers called legal draftsmen make sure the new law is not unconstitutional before they write the new law. The law is written in a legal language that has special meanings. When the intended new law referred to as a Bill has been drafted it is taken to the Cabinet to be studied by the Cabinet Ministers. If the Bill is not worded properly it is taken back to the legal draftsmen for them to re-write. When the wording of the Bill satisfies the whole Cabinet copies are passed to each Member of Parliament for them to review it.

The Minister whose portfolio the Bill effects tells Parliament he wants them to discuss or debate the Bill at a later sitting. The Bill is then read by Parliament for the first time this is called the First Reading. If the Bill is very important there is a long time before it is debated in Parliament. By the time the Bill comes up for debate the general public would have heard about it from the media. The public's response after hearing about the Bill let the MP's know how they feel about the Bill. The debate on the Bill starts when the Minister asks for the Bill to be read a second time. The Minister lets Parliament know why the Government fell the Bill is important, and how the people have been affected because the Bill does not exist. There is little debate if the opposition agrees with the Bill therefore the debate time will be short. If the opposition disagrees with the Bill, the debate is usually long and heated. During the second reading, a vote is taken if the majority agrees with the Bill it passes the second reading. When the Bill has passed the second reading a Selected Committee examines the Bill before it is referred back to the House of Assembly

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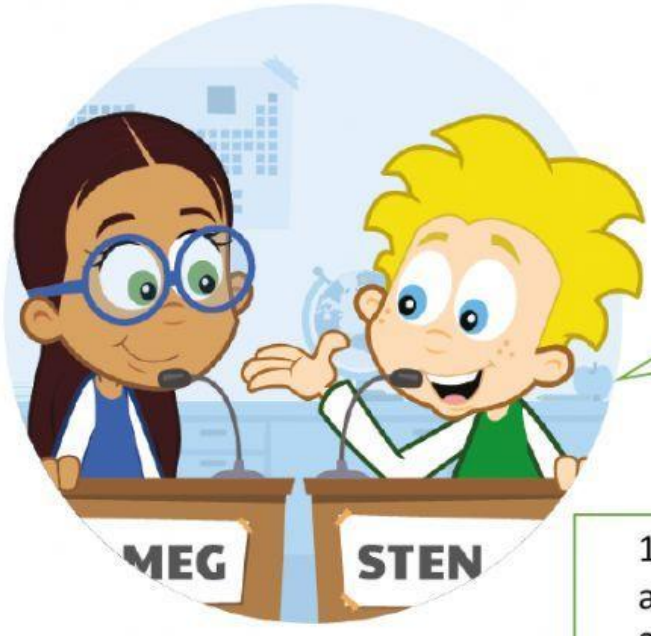
for the Third Reading. No debate takes place during the Third Reading but a vote is taken. If a majority supports the Bill, it has passed the house.

The Bill is then taken to the Senate for further reading. The Senate can only delay the passing of a Bill. If they disagree with a Bill, they can hold it up for only a certain period. The Senate however cannot delay any Bill that deals with money. The House of Assembly can over rule their disagreement. Since the Senate is made up from a majority of government member Bills usually pass the senate. The Bill is then taken back to the House of Assembly before going to the Governor General to sign. Once it is signed, it becomes an Act of Parliament and therefore the law of the land.

Let's See what we can extract from the Notes Above



Questions To Debate!!!

1. What is the first step in deciding on a new law?[2]
2. Who is a legal draftsmen? [2]
3. What is the name of a new intended law? [2]
4. Why is it important for all members of cabinet to discuss a bill? [4]

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Let's Try a Practice BJC Question

SECTION D

SHORT ANSWERS (10 marks)

Study Source A and B. Then answer ALL questions.

Source A: How a Law is made.

When the government decides that a new law is needed, a proposal is drawn up and discussed with the legal draftsmen, whose special task is to write new laws. They must make sure that the new law follows the rules of the constitution and does not conflict with any existing law.

From: Primary Social Studies & Tourism Education for The Bahamas Book 6, 1996.

Source B: A debate in Parliament

From: Primary Social Studies & Tourism Education for The Bahamas Book 6, 1996.

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(a) Who is the speaker in **Source B**?

[1]

(b) Which **TWO** groups of people are given copies of a bill to study before it becomes law?

[2]

(c) Give the names of and briefly describe the **THREE** occasions when the bill is formally presented to Parliament.

[3]

(d) Do you agree that it is necessary for a bill to be formally presented to the members of the Parliament on **THREE** occasions? Explain your answer fully.

[4]

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