**Political system of Great Britain**

The UK is a constitutional monarchy or a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch at the head of the State whose powers are limited by the constitution. In practice, the Queen reigns but doesn’t rule. The Supreme legislation Authority in the UK belongs to the Queen and Parliament.

The British Parliament consists of 2 chambers: the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The House of Lords has 850 members, composed of the Lords "Temporal" (i. е., Barons, Earls, Marquises, and Dukes), and the Lords "Spiritual" (i.е., the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, and twenty-four Bishops). The leader is the Lord Chancellor.

Today the center of parliamentary power is in the Commons. The House of Commons comprises 630 members, who are elected by ballot in the various constituencies of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The election is held every five years, unless Parliament voluntarily dissolves itself before its term finishes, and at this election every person above the age of twenty one has a vote. The party which has the largest number of members returned to Parliament takes office and is called the Government; the party or parties in the minority is called the Opposition. The Government sits on the right of the Speaker's chair, the Opposition on the left.

There are present the following parties: the Conservatives, the Labour Party, the Liberals, the Communist Party and it is from the party in power that the Ministry is formed. The Prime Minister (or Premier) is the principal Statesman in Parliament, and he chooses from the Lords or the Commons the men, numbering about sixty, to fill the principal offices. He obtains the Queen's permission for their appointment, and they form the Ministry. From these are chosen the fifteen to twenty to form the Cabinet. These are the holders of the most important offices, e.g., Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Defence, the Minister of Health, the President of the Board of Trade, etc.

A bill may be introduced by any member, but in practice bills are generally introduced by a Minister.

The first stage is the first reading of the bill. There is no debate or discussion at this stage, but copies of the bill are printed and distributed among members so that they may study its proposals.

Then comes the second reading. On this occasion the member explains the bill, it is discussed, criticized and finally the Speaker (the «President" of the House of Commons) asks if it has the approval of the House, the members shout "Aye" or "No", and the Speaker gives his decision as to whether the "ayes" or the "noes" are in the majority, if his decision is challenged by a member, a division is taken and the House "divides": The members go into the lobbies, the "ayes" going into the right lobby at the back of the Speaker's chair, the "noes" into the left lobby. Here the four "tellers" count them as they pass in, and report to the Speaker. If the bill passes the second reading it goes to a committee. When the House goes into Committee the Speaker leaves the chair and his place is taken by the Chairman of Committee, who sits at the Clerk's table.

The bill is now discussed in detail and many alterations may be made. When its form has been agreed upon, the Speaker is recalled and receives the report of the Committee. He then asks the House to vote again, and if the bill is now passed it goes to its third reading and then to the House of Lords. The Lords may reject the bill or may amend it, but they have no power to amend or reject a finance bill.