Chile: summary from Silvina Danesi.

Before 1990: president in charge

1990: transfer of functions from the President to the Mesa and the Committee on R&HA, the creation of a “Leaders Delegation’s Meeting”, the introduction of “abstentions”, and the rotation system for the Incidentes.

**Mesa** in charge of daily agenda-setting and committee-assignment functions. Likely, the administration, budgeting, and the human resources management, all presidential responsibilities shared with the Committee on R&HA, were definitely transferred to the latter.

1994, Mesa: The Mesa gained and lost functions. For one part, it was assigned the preparation and implementation of the budget, and the adoption of all measures necessary to publicize the activity of the Chamber. For the other part, the agenda-setting functions that had been transferred from the President to the Mesa in 1990 were reassigned to the former because “the experience of these three years showed that it is the President of the Chamber who actually performs them.” 181 To put it another way, the practice showed what the Reglamento had established for more than one hundred years before the 1990 reform.

President of the Chamber: President of the Chamber chairs the Mesa and the Committee on R&HA, two institutions whose membership is monopolized (Mesa) or over-represented (Committee on R&HA) by the ruling coalition

Rules committee, 1994: The amendment also modified the membership and functions of the Committee on R&HA. From then on, in addition to the Mesa members, it would be composed of 13 delegation leaders. Pursuing transparency, the revision established that the committee would: a) appoint the staff of the Chamber following a Secretary General proposition, b) approve the Chamber’s budget prepared by the Mesa and the travels of deputies outside the country, and c) propose the Chamber the amount of official funds to be assigned to deputies and the membership of a committee in charge of auditing the implementation of the Chamber’s budget.

new prerogatives

* By the Constitutional Law of the National Congress: the rejection of bills and amendments.
  + Bills: the bill dies before referral (to committees).
  + Amendment: amendment is suppressed and not considered on the floor or in committee (this prerogative was also accorded to committee Chairs).

New “Leaders Delegation’s Meeting”: chaired by the President of the Chamber, whose decisions are adopted by a weighted voting system. A decision adopted by the unanimous consent of these leaders is mandatory for the Chamber. (leaders: the minimum size of delegations was reduced from 12 to 9 deputies, adding that each party could form one delegation per 9 deputies they had in the Chamber. So parties have more than one delegation).

Among other legislative priorities the Leaders Delegation’s Meeting decides together with the Mesa which bills are subject to "immediate treatment" since 1994.

The new Reglamento fixed a strict proportionality for the Incidentes (The period of “Incidentes” in the Chilean lower Chamber is similar to the “The Hour” in Argentina. Opposition deputies use this term to express their views about current events, justify their position in certain issues, and exercise the congressional oversight of the executive branch.)

New type of voting: abstention, they could be counted as negative or positive votes. No definition.

* 1994 change: the measure adopted to solve the “unexpected outcome” was twofold. First, the Chamber would vote again and deputies who had abstained would be asked to vote in the affirmative or in the negative. Second, if the same result persisted, abstentions would be counted as affirmative votes.

Commiittes: 1994: With respect to the committee system, the reform empowered standing committees to create subcommittees (to which they could delegate all or any of their functions except the power to report directly to the Chamber), created two standing committees, and renamed two committees.

Committee chairs: Chairs last in their position the whole legislative period (four years). They have complete and exclusive control of the committee procedure and agenda. Their prerogatives include the decision to hold secret sessions and to assign meetings the specific purpose of discussing current events (a kind of “incident(s)” meeting), the rejection of amendments, and the preparation of the itemized list of rules Hacienda should study in the “financing analysis.” The participative reform of 1990 had transformed the exclusive decision of Chairs to hold secret sessions into a majority decision. As it happened with other measures, this amendment was suppressed in 1994.

The impressive power of Chairs, coupled with the jurisdiction of the Hacienda Committee, gives an idea of the influential position of the Chair of this committee.

Hacienda: in addition to its jurisdiction, Hacienda is referred bills reported by technical committees to carry out the “financing analysis” or if, for whatever reason, they did not report it (subsidiary role). Hacienda can analyse not only rules related to the “financing analysis,” but also the rest of the bill if its members believe it may relate to financing matters (the controversial role known as the “revision or control power”). Bills that fall into Hacienda’s jurisdiction cannot be analyzed on the floor without its report even with the unanimous consent of the Chamber. This pre-eminence was confirmed in 1989 when the Constitutional Law of the National Congress defined its jurisdiction, and mandated that its members would be part, in their own right, of the special bicameral committee in charge of analyzing the National Budget every year.

Rules: the Mesa is part of it, the amendments to the Reglamento require its report, and it is in charge of the preparation, approval, and auditing of the internal budget, and of the administration and human resources management of the Chamber.218 As noted, it is the only committee that has 16 members since 1990