

PREFACE

Scope of Work

These volumes set forth and analyze the modern precedents of the House of Representatives. The early precedents of the House, dating from the First Congress, are found in Asher Hinds' monumental work, published in 1907.⁽¹⁾ The precedents of the House from 1908 to 1936 were taken up by Clarence Cannon in a comprehensive study supplementing the earlier work by Hinds.⁽²⁾ It is the function of these volumes to review the precedents from 1936 through the first session of the 93d Congress, except as otherwise noted. Subsequent precedents will be found in supplements to this edition to be prepared for each Congress.⁽³⁾

It is altogether fitting that this compilation of the modern precedents of the House should be published on the 200th Anniversary of the initial meetings of the First Continental Congress. I believe that the relatively stable government that has prevailed in this country for two centuries is in large measure attributable to the vigorous and strikingly effective parliamentary system that evolved in the House. It is a system that is perhaps the most carefully adjusted and scientifically balanced of any parliamentary body in the world. It represents the considered judgment of generations of our wisest legislators, and the product of two centuries of self-government. In retrospect, it can be seen as a contribution of an enlightened society to the security and perpetuation of our democracy. Some countries have seen their governments rise and fall in relatively rapid succession in part because their parliamentary systems do not have the inherent toughness and resiliency of ours.

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1. Hinds' Precedents of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C., 1907), referred to hereinafter as Hinds' Precedents.
 2. Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (Washington, D.C., 1936), referred to hereinafter as Cannon's Precedents.
 3. Pub. L. No. 93-544 (88 Stat. 1777), providing that the precedents be updated every two years.