

PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT

The president of the United States of America is decidedly the most powerful elected executive in the world. The constitution had declared that, ' the executive power shall be vested in a president of the United States of America.' The framers of the constitution intended to make the president the constitution ruler. But, in due course of time, the office has gathered around itself such a plentitude of powers that the American president has become ' the greatest ruler of the world' . He has vast powers. According to Munro, he exercises ' the largest amount of authority ever wielded by any man in a democracy.'

It is difficult to believe that the modern presidency was deliberately created by the founding fathers in their form. They did not want to do anything that would directly or indirectly lead to concentration rather than separation of powers. Their main decision was to have a single executive head— a part of honour and leadership rather than that of ' commanding authority' . But the modern presidency is the product of practical political experience. Three powers of the president have been supplemented not only by amendments including twenty-second amendment, twenty-third amendment and twenty-fifth amendment; but also by customs, usages, judicial interpretations and enlargement of authority by various president' s themselves.

Process of Election

The presidency of the United States of America is one of the greatest political offices of the world. He is the chief executive head of the state as well as the head of the

administration. The makers of the constitution were very much agitated over the nature of the executive. In their anxiety to establish a free, yet limited government, they devised a system of government which came to be known as the presidential system; their original contribution was to constitutional law. All executive authority is, therefore, vested in the president.

The constitution provides that a candidate for the office of the president must be:

- (i) A natural born citizen of the US
- (ii) Not less than thirty-five years in age
- (iii) A resident of the United States for at least fourteen years

The president is elected for four years. Originally, the constitution was silent about presidential re-election. US President George Washington, refused a third term on the ground that this would make the United States too much of a monarchical rule. So, a convention grew that a president should not seek election for the third time. The convention was followed till 1940, when Roosevelt offered himself for the third term election and he succeeded. He was elected even for the fourth time.

In 1951, the US constitution was amended. According to this amendment of the constitution, the tenure of the office of the president was fixed for two terms.

Thus,

Franklin D. Roosevelt continues to remain the only president to be elected for more than twice in American history.

Further the constitution provides that in case a vice-president assures the presidency consequent upon death, resignation, etc., of the president, he will be allowed to

seek only

one election provided that he has held the office for more than two years of a term to

which some other person was elected. If someone has held office to which someone

else had been elected, for less than two years, he can be elected for two full terms by his

own right.

The constitution provides for the removal of the president earlier than the completion

of his term of four years. He may be removed by impeachment. He can be impeached

for treason, bribery or other high crimes. The impeachment proceedings against a president

may be initiated by the House of Representatives only. The charges are framed by

representatives by a simple majority. The charges thus prepared are submitted to the

senate, and a copy of the charge sheet is sent to the president. Now the senate sits as a

court and the chief-justice of the Supreme Court presides over its sittings. The president

may either appear personally or engage counsel for his defence. After the arguments of

both the sides are over, the senate may decide by two-third majority to impeach the

president.