

The four active members were to be free from the care of departments of government. They were Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, with Mr. Henderson as the representative of Labour. Mr. Bonar Law, the Conservative leader, was also to be a member, but he was chiefly to concern himself with the task of leader of the House of Commons.

Mr. Lloyd George, in insisting that a small body of men should direct the war, aimed to ensure undivided energy in reaching the needed decisions of a momentous crisis. He did not call it a committee of the old Cabinet. This would mean that it should report to the larger body and be subject to its authority, while, in fact, the opposite was the case, that the smaller body itself had final authority and gave instructions to the ministers who composed the former Cabinet. The name War Cabinet expressed with exactitude the fact that this Cabinet existed to meet the crisis of war and thus controlled all branches of government. It was to direct war policy. The ministers most immediately concerned with waging war were not members. It is indeed a paradox that the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty were not in the War Cabinet. Because they had charge of great departments they were fully occupied with their duties. It was the function of the War Cabinet to determine what they should do.

There were some who urged that the War Cabinet should not absorb all the powers of government, but that side by side with it there should be a second cabinet to deal with domestic affairs. The idea of two cabinets dividing between them the authority of government was assuredly an innovation as great as that of a small cabinet in which sat none of the heads of great departments. Two cabinets were, however, impossible for, as Lord Curzon said in a debate on the cabinet in the House of Lords on June 19, 1918, "it is simply out of the question to draw a line of division, of demarcation, as between what are domestic questions and what are war questions. Nine-tenths of the questions which are commonly called domestic, which would be domestic in peace times, are war questions now." Such matters as food production, shipping, labour, taxation, were vitally connected with war. The War Cabinet was in consequence supreme. The heads of great departments, themselves of cabinet rank, became its servants. At such innovations champions of the old order were staggered. The whole world of the Empire, said Lord Middleton, in the debate, has fallen on the shoulders of half a dozen oligarchs." The heads of the great ministries, unchecked by