

the existing form of government, taking into full consideration the prejudices and customs that had hitherto prevailed. The result of the changes wrought was the introduction of the "Great Council" which finally became the parliament of the realm; members who were state officers and chief officials of the court became a "Permanent Royal Council" from which sprang the modern "Privy Council" and at length the "Cabinet."

The cabinet system, as is customary with all innovations, was at first looked upon with misgivings, due to the fact that the "Privy Council" which preceded it as an instrument of government, had become slow and unwieldy in the administration of the affairs of the country. Moreover, it was further impeded by the presence of the reigning sovereign at its sittings the result of which was the reflection particularly, of his sentiments. Besides the members of the cabinet were chosen from both parties, thus leaving in it an element of division which is never consistent with sound policy, and moreover these members were not responsible as a cabinet but only as officers of the crown.

From this may be gleaned the essential principles of the modern cabinet, which are as J. A. R. Marriott points out in his work, "English Political Institutions." (a) The exclusion of the sovereign; (b) close correspondence between the cabinet and the parliamentary majority for the time being; (c) political homogeneity of the cabinet; (d) collective responsibility; (e) the ascendancy of the Prime Minister.

This first principle was not practised down to the death of Queen Anne, and how long it would have remained a dead letter is somewhat problematical were it not for the accidental circumstance that George I. could not speak English, so, since his reign no sovereign has attended cabinet meetings. This is due to the force of precedent, another example of which is found in the custom of the American presidents sending written messages to Congress. Washington and John Adams addressed Congress in person but as Jefferson was not a fluent speaker he adopted the method of sending the written message. This practise was faithfully adhered to ever since his time until Woodrow Wilson, who occupies the chair of state at the present time, set aside all custom and appeared in person at the meeting of his cabinet.

Close correspondence between the cabinet and the parliamentary majority was slow in being realized and was not at all possible until the definition of the party system was introduced into parliament. The utter necessity of this principle may be in-