

Legislative

In Canada only Parliament has the power to make laws. And Parliament comprises:

- The Crown: the Governor General, the Queen's representative in Canada;
- The House of Commons, with elected members who make up the Government and the Opposition;
- The Senate, with members appointed by past and present Prime Ministers.

The main function of Parliament is debate. All legislation is scrutinized, criticized and amended in Parliament before it is signed into law.

Bills are introduced in the House of Commons. Once passed, they are forwarded to the senate. The final step is Royal Assent. Bills become law when they are signed by the Governor General.

Executive

Though executive powers are carried out in the Queen's name, the Prime Minister and the members of Cabinet direct the machinery of government.

The Prime Minister of Canada is the elected leader of the ruling political party in Parliament. The foremost power and responsibility for making and implementing all policy rests with the Prime Minister.

An important responsibility of the executive is the administration of government departments. Most members of the Cabinet—ministers—have their own departments. Ministers rely on employees of the civil service to perform the day to day management of Canada's affairs.

Cabinet ministers present policy and legislative proposals to their colleagues in the various Cabinet committees for discussion. The resulting committee report is then forwarded to the general Cabinet for further discussion and final approval by the Prime Minister.

Secretaries of State are not members of the Cabinet but are assigned to assist Cabinet Ministers with their portfolios.