

and precedent. Before a member can occupy a cabinet position, he must be sworn in as a Privy Councillor. However, the Privy Council itself has not been asked for political advice for over two centuries. The cabinet is not responsible to it. Membership of the Privy Council is for life. The leaders of the minority in the Commons who have occupied cabinet positions in the past, theoretically, have still the right to advise the crown.

The cabinet discusses all questions of public policy,—the nature of the measures to be introduced into Parliament, the relations with foreign countries, and the well-nigh innumerable matters that devolve on the government of a nation. Its deliberations are held in private, and the results of these deliberations are made known in its executive, administrative and legislative action. When the action of the sovereign is required in any question of State an announcement to that effect is conveyed to him by the Premier or Responsible Minister. When the sovereign has granted his assent an "order-in-council" (an order passed by the sovereign by and with the advice of the cabinet) is passed, which has the effect of law. Any document which is an act of the executive must be countersigned by a responsible minister or official, and have the "Great Seal," or official evidence of royal will, affixed.

Thus far I have treated of the Genesis and evolution of the British cabinet. It is beyond my scope to discuss the functions of the different departments of administration, for they hide a thousand intricacies born of that composite development so characteristic of English institutions. Now I will turn my attention to Canada, and discuss the Canadian cabinet. The government of "this broad Dominion" (as they style it in Parliament) is for the most part a faithful reproduction of the English system; this applies especially to the cabinet. But before discussing the Canadian cabinet, it is well to give a brief resumé of the modes of government existing in Canada preceding confederation, when the present system was adopted.

From the foundation of Quebec in 1608 until 1760,—the period of French rule,—absolute government prevailed in Canada. Prior to 1664, Canada was under the control of commercial companies to whom the French king gave exclusive rights over the fur trade. The year 1664 saw the last of this commercial rule, and Canada was made a French province with a government of its own. The government comprised the Governor, the Intendant and the Bishop. The Governor had charge of the military forces while the Intendant controlled the finances. A