

happen that a particular minister is asked for his resignation, on account of gross misconduct of the affairs of his department, or of unauthorized utterances on political questions. An example of this kind occurred in 1851, when Lord Palmerston, then foreign secretary, was dismissed from office on account of his unauthorized expressions of approval concerning the "Coup d'état" of the Third Napoleon.

The cabinet does not invariably consist of the same number of members; Lord Salisbury's cabinet (1897) consisted of nineteen. We must distinguish between the "cabinet" and the "ministry"; the ministry consists of all those executive officers who have seats in Parliament. These are the members who are expected to resign their seats when the cabinet is defeated in the Commons. Eleven officials always have seats in the cabinet. They are: the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord of the Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the five Secretaries of State (for Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, the Colonies, India, and War), and the First Lord of the Treasury. To these are added from three to seven others, according as the occasion demands, viz., the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the President of the Board of Trade, the President of the Local Government Board, the President of the Board of Education, the President of the Board of Agriculture, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the Postmaster-General. The rule which governs these additions is that every interest which is likely to be prominent in the debates and proceedings of the House of Commons should have a cabinet minister to speak for it and offer responsible advice. The Prime Minister generally occupies the position of First Lord of the Treasury, though he may choose another portfolio if he so wishes. However, the Treasury position is most acceptable to the Premier, since its official duties are light, and give him considerable leisure to devote to his duties as leader of the party in power.

No member may accept a cabinet office without going before his constituents for re-election. This is generally a matter of form only, since in very few cases do the opposing party or parties place a candidate in the field. Before the reign of George I, the king selected the cabinet officers as well as the Premier. But as George I was not conversant with the English language he entrusted that duty to Walpole—his Prime Minister. This custom has been followed since. As I have stated before, the cabinet is not recognized by law; its existence is due to custom