

The true position of the king is that of an honored and influential hereditary councillor. The king is really a permanent councillor, differing from the other ministers in the fact that he is not responsible to parliament for his acts and therefore less powerful than they. Prior to the reign of George I, the king attended the meetings of the cabinet; but the first George could not speak English, so, since his reign, no sovereign has attended cabinet meetings. Another example of the force of precedent is found in the custom of American Presidents sending written messages to Congress. Washington and John Adams addressed Congress in person, but as Jefferson, the third President, was not a facile speaker, he adopted the method of sending a written message. This practice has been followed since.

The responsibility of the ministers to Parliament constitutes their strength, because it makes them the agents of Parliament. The king appoints only such ministers as have the confidence of the House of Commons; and he does it after this manner: he "commands the attendance" of the recognized leader of the party which has a majority in the House of Commons and asks him to form a cabinet. If the leader thinks his party will have no objections, he accepts the commission, and usually, after due consultation with the most prominent men of his party, he gives the sovereign a list of men whom he recommends for appointment to the chief offices of State. These men the sovereign appoints and commissions as a matter of course. They are men of recognized ability and administrative capacity drawn from both Houses of Parliament.

It is the command of precedent, that if the cabinet is defeated on any important measure in the House of Commons, or if a vote of censure is passed on them in that House, the ministers must resign and a new cabinet is formed in accordance with the views of the new majority. The reason for the whole cabinet resigning together is perfectly plain. For, if the government could "throw overboard" those of their number whose apartments were particularly affected, the House of Commons would be cheated of all real control over the cabinet, since the defeated cabinet by sacrificing a few ministers to appease popular disapproval, could keep substantially the same body of men in office. If a defeated or censured cabinet think that the adverse vote in the House of Commons does not bespeak the opinion of the country at large, they advise the sovereign to that effect; he dissolves the House and declares a new election in order. The fate of the cabinet depends on the outcome. It may sometime