

The duties of the new Secretary to the Cabinet are set out in the appointing Order in Council as:—

- (a) the preparation for the approval of the Prime Minister of such agenda for Cabinet meetings as may be required;
- (b) the keeping of such notes of Cabinet meetings and conclusions thereof as may be required;
- (c) the preparation and submission to members of the Cabinet in advance, of such information as may be necessary for its deliberation;
- (d) the communication to Ministers, departments and others concerned of the decisions of the Cabinet;
- (e) the maintenance of liaison between the Cabinet and Committees thereof; and
- (f) such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by the Governor in Council.

Here was an important step in the development of Cabinet government in Canada encouraged, of course, by the pressures of wartime. It led to the gradual adoption of procedures along the lines of several of the recommendations of the Murray and McLennan reports and also to a clearer understanding of the proper functions of the Cabinet as a policy making and executive body as distinct from those of the Governor General in Council, concerned with the formal implementation of advice tendered the Crown. The course taken paralleled what had happened already in the United Kingdom and procedurally owed much to British experience. At the same time its evolution was along distinctive lines in keeping with Canadian conditions and conventions.

Another wartime implementation of earlier recommendations was the appointment of Parliamentary Assistants to various Ministers for the first time in 1943—a practice that has persisted throughout the postwar years.

For some years, the work of the new Secretary to the Cabinet was concerned principally with the Cabinet War Committee which met one or more times a week and was the most active and important of the various ministerial committees. Regular procedures developed for recording discussion and decisions. Agenda were circulated before meetings together with explanatory memoranda identified by document numbers, decisions were communicated for action where required and a routine follow-up on this made with departments.

To assist the Secretary in this new and businesslike approach a small addition was made to the Privy Council Office staff and as the volume of committee work increased there was a modest enlargement. These additions included officers on loan from both civil and military departments and temporary appointees from outside the public service and the group became known as the Cabinet Secretariat. In addition to working for ministerial committees, the group provided secretaries for a number of related inter-departmental committees. A small map room was organized and operational summaries provided for the information of the War Committee. The Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee later became a member of the Secretariat. When joint defence projects with the United States in the northwest made it advisable to appoint a special commissioner in the area he was also associated with the Secretariat, as was the special military adviser to the Prime Minister.

The small organization of the war years served a useful purpose and in the transition years to peacetime conditions there was no question of its abolition. After the demise of the Cabinet War Committee in 1945 the secretarial procedures that had been developed about it were applied regularly to meetings of the Cabinet, as well as to existing and new Cabinet committees. Conclusions were recorded, a new series of Cabinet documents started and decisions communicated for action.\*

As time went on there were of course some changes. For instance the Secretariat of the Chiefs of Staff Committee moved back to National Defence when a full time chairman of the committee was appointed, the establishment of the Privy Council Office was re-organized

\* For an authoritative and detailed account of the war and transition periods see "Cabinet Government in Canada; some recent developments in the Central Executive", by A. D. P. Heeney, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 12, No. 3, August 1946.