

that have been passed in both Houses of Parliament and which thereby become Acts of Parliament with the force of law (unless Parliament prescribes specifically otherwise). Like the Queen, he is bound in virtually all cases to carry out these duties in accordance with the advice of his responsible Ministers. Should he not wish to accept their advice, and should they maintain that advice, his only alternative is to replace the existing government with a new government. This alternative could be exercised only if, at the same time, the principle of responsible government could be upheld. This means that the Governor General's discretion in choosing another government is strictly limited to a situation in which a person other than the existing Prime Minister could command the confidence of the House of Commons.

In Canada, as in other constitutional monarchies, there is a clear division between the executive and representational functions of state. The Prime Minister, as the elected political leader of the country, is the chief executive and head of the government. The Governor General, on the other hand, is not involved in any way in party politics or political affiliation and he is, therefore, in a position to represent Canada as a whole and to speak for Canadians on ceremonial and state occasions. In effect, the Governor General has become an important symbol of the unity of Canada and of the continuity of its institutions and national life.

The Governor General is Canada's host to visiting heads of state and other distinguished visitors from abroad. He extends hospitality of many forms to many Canadians and lends his patronage in support of a great variety of activities throughout the country. The Governor General receives the Letters of Credence of Ambassadors appointed to Canada, receives Commonwealth High Commissioners on appointment and holds investitures for the conferring of honours and awards.

The Privy Council. The BNA Act of 1867 (Sect. 11) provides for "a council to aid and advise in the Government of Canada, to be styled the Queen's Privy Council for Canada...". The Council that in fact advises the Queen's representative, the Governor General, is the Committee of the Privy Council whose membership is identical to that of Cabinet.

Membership in the Privy Council is for life. As at December 31, 1972, there were 132 members, including the 30 Cabinet Ministers of the government of the day, former Cabinet Ministers, various members of the Royal Family, past and present Commonwealth Prime Ministers, Premiers of provinces, former Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada and a few distinguished civilians. A member of the Privy Council of Canada is styled "Honourable" and may use the initials "P.C." after his name. A member of the Privy Council of Britain is styled "Right Honourable". The Governor General, the Chief Justice of Canada and the Prime Minister of Canada automatically assume the title "Right Honourable" on assumption of office.

The Privy Council as a whole has met on only a few ceremonial occasions; its constitutional responsibilities to advise the Crown on matters respecting the Government of Canada are discharged exclusively by the Committee of the Privy Council (the Cabinet). The legal instruments through which executive authority is exercised are called Orders in Council. The procedure is for the Committee of the Privy Council to make a submission to the Governor General for his approval which he is obliged to give in almost all circumstances; with this approval, the submission becomes an Order in Council. Meetings of the Committee of the Privy Council or a sub-committee of this Committee are held without formal ceremony.

The office of the President of the Privy Council was originally occupied, more often than not, by the Prime Minister but from time to time, especially in recent years, it has been occupied by another Minister. On July 5, 1968, the Prime Minister explained that the incumbent of the office of President of the Privy Council would also be the Government Leader in the House of Commons, with the broad responsibility of directing the business of the House, including such matters as supervision of the government's replies to questions in the House and of parliamentary returns in general, and also a special responsibility on behalf of the government of ensuring that Parliament, through its operations and organization of business, can effectively discharge its vital role in the Canadian political process under the increasing pressure of modern government.

The following, with the dates when they were sworn in, were members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada as at December 31, 1972:

Hon. Thomas Alexander Crerar, October 12, 1917

Hon. Henry Herbert Stevens, September 21, 1921

Hon. William Earl Rowe, August 30, 1935

Hon. Colin William George Gibson, July 8, 1940