

In addition special and ad hoc committees of the cabinet are established from time to time and meet as required: the cabinet committees on the public service, security and intelligence, labour relations and the special committee of council which considers many submissions to the Governor-in-Council.

Growing reliance on the cabinet committee system since World War II is evidence of its usefulness. The following is a brief outline of the involvement of cabinet and cabinet committees with a piece of legislation that the government ultimately introduces in the Commons or the Senate.

On the initiative of a minister a policy proposal is prepared, the implementation of which will require new legislation or the amendment of existing legislation. The proposal is addressed formally to cabinet, but is considered first by a subject-matter committee. If approved, the proposal goes forward as a recommendation for confirmation or consideration by cabinet. Proposals with financial implications are considered by the priorities and planning committee or by one of the four policy committees which are responsible for the government's expenditure management system. If the committee's

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Cabinet committees provide a forum for thorough study of policy proposals. All memoranda to cabinet, including proposals for legislation, are considered by a cabinet committee first except when they are of unusual urgency or when the prime minister directs that they should be studied immediately by the whole cabinet.

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decision is confirmed, the justice department is instructed to prepare a draft bill expressing in legal terms the intent of the policy proposal. When the draft bill has the minister's approval, he submits it to the cabinet committee on legislation and house planning and it is examined from a legal rather than a policy point of view. Once this committee agrees that the bill is acceptable in all respects, or with modifications, and could be introduced in Parliament, it reports this to cabinet. If cabinet confirmation is given, the prime minister initials the bill and it is then introduced either in the Senate or the House of Commons, depending on constitutional and political considerations.

The order and manner in which a bill is considered in Parliament is the responsibility of the president of the Privy Council and house leader who negotiates these matters with his counterparts in the opposition parties. If a bill is to be introduced in the Senate, the house leader will discuss questions such as timing and tactics with the leader of the government in the Senate, who in turn will negotiate consideration of the bill with the opposition leader in the Senate.

**The Privy Council office** is a secretariat providing staff support to the special committee of the Privy Council, to the cabinet and to the prime minister. For the purposes of the Financial Administration Act it is considered a government department. Since the prime minister is, in effect, chairman of the cabinet, he is the minister responsible for the Privy Council office. The work of the Privy Council office is directed by a public servant known as the clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet. He is the senior member of the public service of Canada.

**Parliamentary secretaries.** The Parliamentary Secretaries Act of June 1959 provided for the appointment of 16 parliamentary secretaries from among the members of the Commons to assist ministers. That act was amended by the Government Organization Act, 1970, which allows the number of parliamentary secretaries to equal the number of ministers who hold offices listed in Section 4 of the Salaries Act, that is, ministers with departmental responsibilities, the prime minister, the leader of the government in the Senate and the president of the Privy Council. A parliamentary secretary works under direction of his minister, but has no legal authority in his association with the department, nor is he given acting responsibility or any of the powers, duties and functions of a minister in his minister's absence or incapacity. Parliamentary secretaries are appointed by the prime minister and hold office for 12 months.