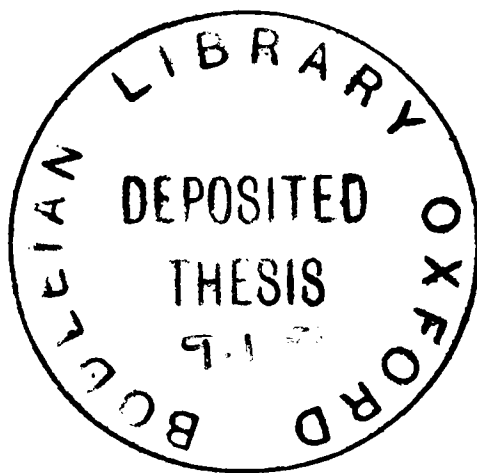


THE STRUCTURE OF THE CANADIAN CABINET
1948 TO 1963

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The Structure of the Canadian Cabinet 1948 to 1963

ABSTRACT

The structure of the Canadian cabinet has been taken by a variety of observers and participants in government to be an important, or at least an intriguing subject. The volume of writings about the Canadian cabinet has increased over the past decade. Civil servants have produced unpublished additional volumes of memoranda. The pace of change in cabinet structures, and prime ministerial announcements about them, suggest that they are regarded as significant policy instruments and as significant indications of the character and directions of a government. Certainly it is no longer true to say, as Prime Minister Diefenbaker did in 1960, that "The means by which the Cabinet conducts its business are traditionally regarded as its own affair, and questions on the subject are normally neither asked nor answered".

But if questions are increasingly asked, important difficulties remain in the way of getting and assessing answers. One obviously fundamental difficulty is cabinet secrecy. Newer studies of the Canadian cabinet tend understandably to concentrate on recent cabinets, especially where relatively more information is available, and on timely issues such as prime ministerial power. Contemporary studies suffer, however, from a lack of detailed, historical cabinet studies upon which to build and from which

generalizations can be drawn or confirmed. There is not in Canada a substantial body of literature which observes particular cabinets at work in order to make general observations about their work.

A similar difficulty lies in the way of assessing features of the Canadian cabinet in its context of Canadian cabinet government. Problems of cabinet structure are problems of organization, and of personnel, but they are also related to constitutional principles of responsibility. Ministerial relationships with Parliament are explored and criticized; the cabinet is looked at as an organization whose efficiency and effectiveness could be improved. But cabinet structure is not often examined as a manifestation itself of a balance of individual and collective ministerial responsibilities at work. Moreover, the cabinet tends to be seen primarily as expressing collective responsibility, and the supreme issue of cabinet structure as improving coordination. The expression of individual ministerial responsibilities within cabinets at work has been relatively little emphasized.

This thesis studies the ways in which the working relationships among cabinet ministers in two different Canadian ministries were organized to achieve and maintain the continuing collective agreement of individually responsible ministers. The primary intention is to recount, explore and compare two cases of Canadian cabinet structures

at work, in more detail than has hitherto been done. The thesis aims at developing an intimacy with the internal workings of the two cabinet structures and their methods and problems. A second intention is to use this evidence to illuminate certain features of Canadian cabinet government as they arise in cabinet structure. In particular, the application of concepts of individual and collective ministerial responsibility, or collective decision-taking, is emphasized as a means of expressing and assessing the dynamics of cabinets at work.

A fundamental basis for this study is the presentation of new information obtained through access to files of the Canadian Privy Council Office, supplemented by interviews with ministers and officials close to the cabinet. The combination of documentary and oral evidence was essential in order to study working cabinet structure as well as its organizational skeleton.

Research was launched on four cabinets, those of Prime Ministers St. Laurent, Diefenbaker, Pearson, and Trudeau. A study only of the first two was carried to completion, however, for several reasons. Narrowing the focus permitted the desired exploration in depth. Cabinet organization prior to the Second World War was rudimentary, and the war presented extraordinary circumstances; but the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker ministries are far enough in the past for sensitivities to have diminished (even though they

are within the bounds of the thirty year rule) without too much evidence being lost. Roots of later developments in cabinet structure go back to the period 1948 to 1963, but present concerns do not necessarily overshadow the previous structures themselves. Moreover, on the one hand it was desirable to include cabinets of different parties, and until 1979 Diefenbaker's was the only Conservative cabinet since 1935; on the other hand, consideration of the Pearson cabinet structures leads to the Trudeau structures to which they contributed a great deal. Finally, the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets functioned in comparable times and circumstances, yet present some striking contrasts.

The thesis divides itself into four parts. The first part is introductory. It begins with a discussion of features of cabinet government which bear upon or are illuminated through the detailed examination of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets. The emphasis is upon individual responsibility as an expression of the cabinet's diversity and its nature as a "plural executive"; and upon collective decision-taking as an expression of the cabinet's practical committee nature and as the internal structural dimension of collective responsibility, through which are met the political, administrative, and constitutional necessities of reconciling individual responsibilities. Two contrasting approaches are recognized, which are called "pluralist" and "collegial".

The fundamentally historical approach of the thesis is discussed with an outline of other approaches adopted in studying the Canadian cabinet, followed by observations on some problems and an indication of the place of this thesis in that context. Finally, certain important and specially Canadian influences upon cabinet structure are summarized since their effects recur throughout this study.

A second introductory chapter describes the development of Canadian cabinet structure to 1948.

The bulk of the thesis traces, within this framework, the more or less concrete details of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures. It asks of the two ministries, how were the cabinets structured and by what means did they conduct cabinet business. The approach to structure is not highly theoretical. The cabinet is taken to include not just the cabinet meeting but also ministers meeting, working and communicating with each other on cabinet business in other structured ways. An attempt is made to explore as part of cabinet structure the less formal patterns which run through and around the formal organization, and to capture some sense of the attitudes to or styles of cabinet work which ministers bring to bear.

The cabinet's organizational arrangements form the broad categories within which the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets are studied in detail. Part II deals with the St. Laurent cabinet; Part III with the Diefenbaker

cabinet. Chapters discuss in turn each cabinet's setting and approach, the prime minister, the cabinet meeting, cabinet committees, ministerial relationships, the cabinet secretariat, and senior civil service support for cabinet decision-making. The parallel chapters on the organizational elements of the two cabinets deal with similar issues, even though each chapter focusses upon developing an appreciation of the details, objectives and character of an aspect of the whole St. Laurent or Diefenbaker cabinet structure.

The chapters on the settings of the two cabinets discuss their political situations, the contrasting characters of the two governments, and their personnel overall and individually. The chapters on the prime ministers are naturally personal, but also characterize each in terms of his impact upon and place in his cabinet structure. The methods, habits and conduct of cabinet meetings are discussed, with an emphasis for each cabinet on the degree and character of collective decision-taking which developed. The description of cabinet committees generally and specifically, of their development, practices, and significance, occupies two substantial chapters, and posed particular difficulties in research. The chapters on ministerial relations in the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets focus upon more informal patterns, including the exercise of regional representative responsibilities. In describing how

the Privy Council Office performed its continuing tasks in different circumstances, and how it fulfilled its dual role as the cabinet's secretariat and the prime minister's department, a picture is developed of the "old" Privy Council Office before it was enlarged and elaborated in more recent years. Finally, the effects of senior civil service support upon each cabinet structure, and of the ministries' effects upon the senior civil service, are sketched - though the subject is potentially enough to occupy a much longer study.

Throughout, conclusions are drawn about the facts of each cabinet structure, and comparisons of the two made from time to time. Some of the main threads are pulled together in "Consequences" chapters at the end of each part.

The St. Laurent cabinet structure is characterized as essentially "pluralist"; the Diefenbaker cabinet structure as essentially "collegial". The characterizations are not black and white, of course, and several other themes ebb and flow other than the balance of individual responsibilities and collective decision-taking. These themes are pulled together in the final part of the thesis, its Conclusions. One theme, in a sense the mirror image of the contrast between the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets, is the common elements and continuing problems which they shared despite their differences. Upon this common base, but stimulated by the contrast, general points are made concerning the machinery of cabinet structure - its development and

problems; its formal and informal elements, and the necessary balance and interaction between the two; and the impact upon cabinet structure of individuals and personalities. Conclusions are also drawn about the ways this machinery can work in terms of individual responsibilities which constitute the effective foundation of cabinet structure at work, and collective decision-taking which must harness and challenge the exercise of individual responsibilities. Finally, the role of the prime minister in cabinet structure is discussed: an important theme throughout is the examination of how Prime Ministers St. Laurent and Diefenbaker exercised their responsibilities for and influence upon cabinet structure.

These themes appear elsewhere, in discussions of the details of each cabinet structure; the Conclusions chapter develops them more broadly. Some themes hardly require development - for instance the Canadian cabinet's representative nature. Nevertheless, an abstract inevitably overstates the degree to which generalizations make up a volume. Though one objective is to illuminate some general characteristics of the workings of Canadian cabinet government, the first purpose is to explore and recount the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures. The pursuit of that purpose, to contribute to expanding the basis upon which studies of the Canadian cabinet can build, makes up the bulk of the thesis.

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Abbreviations

Few abbreviations are used; they are largely self-explanatory. They include:

- P.C.O. - Privy Council Office
- P.M.O. - Prime Minister's Office
- C.B.C. - Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
- C.C.F. - Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
- C.J.E.P.S. - Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science
- C.J.P.S. - Canadian Journal of Political Science
- C.P.A. - Canadian Public Administration

PART I:

INTRODUCTION

I CABINET GOVERNMENT AND CANADIAN CABINETS

Louis St. Laurent was Prime Minister of Canada from 1948 to 1957. His period in office marked the culmination of years of Liberal political dominance, but also encompassed the peacetime development and establishment of cabinet structures which had only recently been initiated under wartime pressures. John Diefenbaker was the first Conservative Prime Minister of Canada in twenty-two years, and from 1957 to 1963 he led the last Conservative cabinet before 1979. Those six years reflected unusual political animation to which inherited cabinet structures had to adapt. St. Laurent's approach to government was essentially rationalist, Diefenbaker's essentially intuitive. Though the elements of cabinet structure with which the two prime ministers worked were largely common, the results present striking comparisons.

This thesis looks at the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets in some detail. The focus is upon the internal relationships and workings of cabinet structures. The purposes are first, to explore and recount two particular cases of the way Canadian cabinet structures can work; and second, to use that historical evidence to illuminate certain general and salient features in the workings of cabinet government. More especially, the application to the two cabinet structures of the traditional principles of individual and collective ministerial responsibility is

emphasized. It seems to this author that their interaction expresses the essence of the dynamics of cabinets at work.

Of course, all cabinet governments are different even though their common constitutional inheritance may have been the "Westminster model". As David Butler has pointed out, "current British government too is a variant of the nineteenth century Westminster model". Butler suggests "It is arguable that Australia has moved a smaller distance from the original than has Britain"¹; it may also be arguable that Canada has diverged farther. Nevertheless, the general nature of the species "cabinet government" is recognizable in the Canadian beast and helps to explain some of its characteristics; many others are indigenous.

This introductory chapter is divided into three parts. The first discusses general and salient features of cabinet government about which illumination is sought in the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cases. The second outlines approaches which have been taken to studying the Canadian cabinet so as to place this thesis in their context. The third part canvasses particular characteristics which have influenced cabinet government and cabinet structure in Canada.

Salient Features of Cabinet Government

- Four General Features

For this study, four features stand out: cabinet government has a fundamentally political nature; it is responsible government; it is government by committee; and it manifests a plural executive. All four focus attention upon individual and collective ministerial responsibility.

One fundamental feature of cabinet government is that its constitutional limits and rules are generally politically determined rather than embodied in a clearly defined legal document. This flexibility and evolutionary nature have often been remarked and emphasized, sometimes critically². Canada shares this feature even though, like Australia, it has one essential constitutional document founding the federal nation: but the Canadian constitution as a whole consists of other written and unwritten elements³. There is the same dependence upon practice, custom and precedent even when the practices and customs are not the same as in Britain.

Too much can be made of this feature in comparing political systems, since written constitutions are also interpreted through practice and embody rules which have been politically determined originally, and since the courts may take cognizance of some of the rules of cabinet government while others may be as rigid as if they were found in constitutional tablets. Nevertheless, aside from

the importance of this fundamental feature in the evolution of cabinet governments, it also imparts a special character to the operations of their main elements (which are common or similar to all cabinet governments). Two which are of the greatest importance are not only almost unknown to statute law - that is, the cabinet and the office of prime minister - but they are very difficult to define in terms suitable for statute law⁴. They are established and hedged about by custom and convention, but at the core of the cabinet's functioning or the prime minister's position there is a positive uncertainty and versatility which is more than a reflection of the variety of persons who occupy them. This is not to say that strong views about the roles and functioning of the elements of cabinet government cannot or should not be held: it is to say that to entrench authoritatively one view of these roles would of itself change them, for good or bad. One consequence is the importance of practical variations. Another is the need for general constitutional but non-legal terms which can be used to explain, or criticize, the elements of cabinet government.

Those terms are traditionally found in ideas of responsibility. Though it hardly need be said that the word itself has different meanings, a second fundamental feature of cabinet government is that it is responsible government. The main constitutional relationships of responsible

government today are the relationships between ministers and parliament, albeit the rationale for those relationships also flows from other fundamentals such as the ideal of the sovereignty of parliament and the vital realities of a constitutional monarchy.

We do not flatter ourselves that, of the meanings of responsibility explored by A.H. Birch⁵, constitutional responsibility necessarily implies government acting responsibly. Responsible government does, however, set the fundamental principles of the Westminster model of parliamentary and cabinet government⁶. By strong convention, Ministers of the Crown are members of one of parliament's two houses, so that parliament may hold the government continuously accountable and so that the government's necessary ability to command the confidence of parliament is continuously tested. The principles of cabinet government have traditionally been couched in terms of individual and collective ministerial responsibility to parliament. Though the contemporary reality of parliamentary power to hold the government accountable has been questioned, debates over the present state of cabinet government have often focussed on the meaning of those same principles. The principles also, however, have a significance in terms of the cabinet's own structure and operations, not only in terms of the cabinet's relationships with parliament.

A third salient feature is that cabinet government is "government by committee", in K.C. Wheare's phrase⁷. The cabinet itself is the final, authoritative decision-making committee, the innermost and very distinct community within the larger policy-making community explored in Heclo and Wildavsky's study of the expenditure process in British central government⁸. To say that the cabinet is a collectivity is to reflect upon more than the cabinet's constitutional collective solidarity before parliament and the electorate. The problems of maintaining the collectivity, of its functioning so as to continue to command the confidence of the House of Commons and the nation in the "continuous election campaign"⁹ of which the House is the cockpit, of sharing scarce governmental resources amongst the members of the cabinet: these are practical problems on their own however much they may flow from constitutional origins. The essential problem of cabinet structure is the establishment and nurturing of cabinet organization and methods which encourage the reaching of political agreement by the cabinet as effectively as possible - both general agreement on a continuing basis (for resignations are usually only the final demonstration of longer-standing and even debilitating disagreements), and acceptable agreements on major and minor policy decisions. Cabinet decision-taking is collective

decision-taking: but each cabinet's structure and conduct vary significantly.

A fourth salient feature is that cabinet government is a "plural" executive. Indeed, before the cabinet is a corporate body it is a group of individual ministers. The cabinet is plural because its members, once appointed, are individually endowed with authority and responsibility for different areas of government. Cabinet ministers are not delegates of cabinet collectively, nor of the prime minister despite his stature and his powers over their appointment. They come together in the cabinet to achieve authoritative political agreement under the prime minister's leadership on the basis of their individual responsibilities, not as generalists with higher concerns only. Cabinet ministers do not make up a board of directors of "Government, Inc.". This point was made in a broader sense by Sir William Armstrong when he wrote of Britain that "The first thing to be noted about the central government of this country is that it is a federation of departments"¹⁰; to add to Heclo and Wildavsky's similar citation of those words¹¹, effectively functioning cabinets must make practical use of that key fact.

Moreover the cabinet is doubly and triply plural because each of its members is not only head of a department of government or its political equivalent (such as the Government Leader in the House), but also a leading

figure in the parliamentary party forming the government (coalitions aside, and recognizing some are more leading than others), and in the country's complex of interest constituencies. In Canada the responsibility of representing interest constituencies, particularly regional or provincial interests, to the collectivity of ministers is vital.

Effective cabinet government therefore depends upon concerting individual responsibilities in a constant process of compromise, persuasion, decision, influence, leadership and struggle. As G.W. Jones has emphasized, "the cabinet is an effective decision-taking body and ... it works so effectively because it is made up of contending interests who accept it as the ultimate authority"; "Its essence is diversity ... And yet its function is to reach an agreed decision: to make unity out of diversity."¹² Cabinet's workings as a plural but collective executive - something about which the American authors of "The Federalist" were profoundly sceptical¹³ - are constrained by constitutional principles, by politics, and by the overall shape of the government, but are also channelled and affected by each cabinet's internal structure.

- Ministerial Responsibility and Cabinet Structure

This thesis studies the ways in which the working relationships among cabinet ministers in two different Canadian ministries were organized to achieve and maintain

the continuing collective agreement of individually responsible ministers. The study is concerned with the cabinet's internal arrangements rather than its environment, its accomplishments or its governmental base. In conjunction with the fundamentally historical presentation and exploration of information about the internal workings of two Canadian cabinets, the concepts of individual and collective ministerial responsibility are applied to cabinet structure as a framework through which the two cabinets can be assessed and in terms of which general conclusions can be drawn or confirmed about the way cabinets can work. These concepts are those generally used by ministerial and official practitioners of government at the cabinet level. They are useful because they relate to cabinet government in particular rather than to any organization or any committee. Other cabinet studies also recognize and use ideas of individual and collective responsibility.

Nevertheless, though the balance of the two principles is essential, the collective side of the cabinet is generally emphasized more than its plurality in much of the Canadian literature¹⁴. The importance of individual ministerial responsibilities within cabinets at work has been relatively little emphasized compared to the importance assigned to collective responsibility or the prime minister's power. Partly, in Canada, this is a reflection of a real tilt in "the balance between individual and

collective responsibility of ministers ... increasingly toward the latter"¹⁵. It is questionable whether this emphasis on the collective is permanent or even necessarily desirable. Exploring the balance of individual and collective responsibility in past cabinets may help to provide a broader base from which both insiders and observers can assess the contemporary balance between the individual and the collective in cabinet structure. The concepts of individual and collective ministerial responsibility developed, of course, in respect of the government's relationships with parliament and the Crown¹⁶. David Butler defines "the central doctrine" of individual ministerial responsibility in terms of ministerial answerability to parliament as "an assertion of democratic accountability", and collective cabinet responsibility in terms of the public acceptance of joint responsibility for all acts of the government by any minister who does not resign¹⁷. The original battles of responsible government are over, and the language of political discourse is less predominantly constitutional, but despite noteworthy uncertainties¹⁸ these principles retain their currency. They also apply to cabinet's structural arrangements at work. Indeed it will be recognized that the question of balancing individual and collective responsibility within the cabinet is not dissimilar from a major concern of management and public administration theorists, summarized

by Peter Self as the "central problem ... of coordinating an elaborate system in which full opportunity ought to be taken of the advantages of specialization"¹⁹. Individual ministerial responsibility is a cabinet government expression of the management principle of specialization, and collective responsibility of coordination: but they are not understandable only in this sense.

Moreover, the state of the individual-collective balance within cabinet affects and is affected by ministerial responsibility to parliament. That the cabinet is politically held collectively responsible is the most potent force upon ministers to seek their colleagues' agreement with their policies and accept the collective verdict, and on the other hand to expect and even demand their colleagues' support. The daily facts of ministerial answerability in question period, at parliamentary committees, while sponsoring bills, all reinforce feelings of individual responsibility in dealings with cabinet colleagues. And if ministers' individual responsibility has taken a beating within cabinet, or if the government's spokesman on an issue is not the responsible minister, then those same daily facts lead to mounting frustrations. Moreover, the dependence of effective influence upon reputation²⁰ means a minister's stature amongst his colleagues has a very concrete relationship to the effectiveness with which he fulfills his individual responsibilities in public and in private.

As well, the substance of ministerial responsibility to parliament depends partly upon how it is treated within cabinet. If ministerial responsibilities are respected and important within cabinet's decision-making structures and processes, then the significance of ministerial answerability outside cabinet is reinforced. Conversely, if cabinet's collective responsibility and solidarity reflect decision-making processes which submerge individual ministerial responsibilities within truly collective policy and program formulation, then the substance of ministerial answerability is also undermined. Those who criticize ministerial responsibility as a sham seldom reflect upon its value within cabinet as well as in the government's relations with parliament or ministers' control over their departments.

Though individual and collective ministerial responsibility outside and within the cabinet are related, in fact the senses with which the terms are used are somewhat different.

- Individual Responsibility

Individual responsibility within the cabinet expresses cabinet's diversity. It has to do with the extent to which ministers accept recommendations from their differently responsible colleagues - and with how much or little discussion; with how much autonomy a minister has within his area of responsibility to proceed without

reference to his colleagues, and what kinds of reference are expected; and with how much cooperation or consultation is expected of ministers in policy-making, and by what means, formal or informal. Ministers are individually responsible for their own decision-making, in departmental direction and in evolving policy and program proposals, and to their colleagues and the prime minister as well as to parliament and in public²¹.

But clearly ministers' responsibilities overlap and affect each other. Ministers must share scarce financial and other resources. They are jointly responsible to parliament for each others' responsibilities and require mutual political support. And, in Canada, ministers are responsible not only for their departments, policy areas and related statutory "powers, duties and functions", but also "for representing the differing perspectives and interests of the regions from which they come, perspectives and interests which cut across governmental activities and departmental lines"²².

One consequence of this diversity, then, is the need to work together. The plural executive is also a collective. But individual responsibility also carries potential disadvantages. J.E. Hodgetts complains, for example, that

"a cabinet made up of ministerial heads of equal status ... is ... inclined to spend more time arbitrating jurisdictional squabbles and settling operational decisions rather than confining its attention to larger issues of policy. And, even when attention is given to policy, it is in the context of placating each individual minister's concern for preserving his department's operating programs intact, letting 'policy' emerge as a resultant of balancing conflicting claims for operational jurisdiction."23

Others, however, see the diversity of individual responsibilities as essential. S.E. Finer, for example, believes that, with an "important proviso concerning the role of the prime minister, ... the cabinet is the powerhouse of the entire governmental system" because its members individually combine roles as directing heads of departments, as the majority party's leading policy figures, and as "the steering committee of the legislature"24. It is not irrelevant that in the quite different context of private bureaucracy, one excellent study concluded that "knowing who is supposed to do what is the first requisite of order in complex organization"25. It is similarly important for individual ministerial responsibility to be clear and acknowledged in cabinet structure.

- Collective Decision-Taking

Collective responsibility expresses cabinet's unity. But within the cabinet that unity is not a state but a constant effort to achieve and maintain a whole range of agreements. And more than that, it expresses also some

degree of overall policy directions or planning: how much or how little depends on each cabinet. The internal structural dimension of constitutional collective responsibility is collective decision-taking, through which are met the political, administrative, and constitutional necessities of reconciling individual responsibilities. The "miracle of cabinet solidarity"²⁶ is not achieved easily. It involves all the cabinet's organizational arrangements - the cabinet meeting itself, cabinet committees, central agency controls by individual ministers and their officials acting on behalf or in support of the collective - and less formal ministerial and official relationships.

Moreover, there is no one approach to collective decision-taking, a term which has been deliberately chosen to be neutral. It is important to recognize at the outset two contrasting approaches (of course in practice they are never so clear-cut as theory can make them). One approach is to rely upon individual ministers to develop policy upon which cabinet only finally decides; this may also involve a predisposition for ministers to accept a colleague's proposal unless one of their own responsibilities is engaged. This approach may be called "pluralist". The second approach is to seek to have ministers truly formulate policy collectively as far as possible. This "collegial" approach is today identified with Prime Minister Trudeau, who has explicitly aimed to develop cabinet structure

promoting "collegiality"²⁷; as an analytical concept, however, it need not be taken to apply only after 1968.

Evidently both the collegial and pluralist approaches to collective decision-taking also turn on the expression of individual responsibility within cabinet structures. In fact individual responsibility and collective decision-taking are two sides of the same cabinet coin. This should be no surprise to students of other organizations. As Chester Barnard wrote three decades ago, "The ends of cooperation cannot be accomplished without specialization"²⁸. As neither the collegial nor the pluralist approach alone is realistic in stark practice, so there is a balance in any cabinet structure between individual and collective responsibility: the Secretary to the Cabinet emphasized in 1954 that "Cabinet and its machinery must reconcile and adjust these two ... this is not easy to achieve or maintain"²⁹.

Nor is one balance best: this thesis explores the differing balances in cabinet structure of two quite different cabinets.

- The Prime Minister

In determining any cabinet's structure the prime minister is key. It is unlikely that those who disagree with Richard Crossman on many issues would disagree with his statement that "every cabinet takes its tone from the Prime Minister. The way the Prime Minister conducts it and

administers it will give it its particular character"³⁰. Not only is the prime minister's position of personal influence unrivalled; not only is his a "unique integrating role"³¹ across all his colleagues' responsibilities; but his also are the prerogatives of chairing cabinet, determining the organization of cabinet committees, and assigning ministers to portfolios and committees. In the words of a Privy Council Office publication, the prime minister "is responsible for arranging and managing the decision-making process as a whole", and consequently is concerned "first, that cabinet government, including cabinet structure, works as it should, and second, that the government functions efficiently and effectively"³².

In the orchestration of individual responsibilities and collective decision-taking, the prime minister is indeed the conductor and sometimes the featured soloist, but - to extend the analogy - he is not the composer, and he is conductor of a less than perfectly disciplined chamber orchestra including at least some star players with stature in their own right. A central element of this thesis is the examination of how St. Laurent and Diefenbaker exercised their responsibilities for and influence upon cabinet structure.

- Elements of Cabinet Structure

But cabinet structure involves quite concrete elements too. A fundamental purpose of this thesis is to

trace the details of actual cabinet structure. The "capacity for decisive action"³³ which L.S. Amery considered such an important characteristic of cabinet government depends not only upon constitutional and political factors, vital as they are, but also upon a cabinet's own structural arrangements. This thesis asks of two ministries, how were the cabinets structured and by what means did they conduct cabinet business.

The approach taken to structure is not a highly theoretical one. Structure is simply taken to be, in the words of the Oxford English Dictionary, "the mutual relation of the constituent parts or elements of a whole as determining its peculiar nature or character", or "the coexistence in a whole of distinct parts having a definite manner of arrangement". Of course, cabinet structure is never so neat and consistent as might be wished since it has to do with people - politicians, yet! - who are not always definite or consistent themselves.

This definition and experience of cabinets remind us that "the cabinet" is not just a meeting. It exists and functions between cabinet meetings as well, as cabinet ministers meeting, working and communicating with each other in other structured ways. As S.E. Finer says, "In practice most of [the cabinet's] formal activity is exercised outside the plenary meetings of the Cabinet, either by Cabinet Committees, or by the Prime Minister and the ministers who

are specially involved in any issue, or - as is often the case - by both"³⁴.

It is therefore important to explore as part of cabinet structure the less formal patterns which run through and around the formal organization. An attempt is also made to try to capture some sense of the attitudes to or styles of cabinet work which ministers bring to bear³⁵. Only by seeing cabinet structure in this broader sense can some feeling for its dynamics be conveyed. After all, the cabinet is a community as much, if not more than, it is an organization. In an organization as small as the cabinet (whatever vaster organization its ministers command), individual persons are the fundamental units.

Their relationships take place, however, within cabinet's more or less concrete organizational arrangements. These arrangements form the broad categories within which the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures are studied: the cabinet meeting, cabinet committees, the prime minister's role, ministerial relations, and the support provided by the cabinet secretariat and senior civil service.

An Historical Approach

- Approaches to Studying the Canadian Cabinet

The approach taken in this study is fundamentally historical. Since one of the oft-stated characteristics of cabinet government is its flexibility, some of the dynamics

of cabinet operations may be lost in studies which focus upon a present state of cabinet structure rather than upon its development over some time. And contemporary studies may suffer from a lack of historical studies to draw upon.

It need hardly be said that the historical approach has long been one of the major ways of examining political activities, not least cabinets. It is interesting, however, that an historical approach has been relatively little used in Canadian cabinet studies, especially compared to British cabinet studies³⁶. Perhaps there has been a lack of interest in cabinets past, and relatively little raw material with which to work. Certainly there is an appreciation of the development of the Canadian cabinet behind much of what has been written about it, and sometimes that appreciation is profound, but usually it serves other approaches rather than taking a first place itself³⁷. Partly perhaps this has been due to the influence of behaviouralism on Canadian political studies³⁸, encouraging study of measurable and often extra-governmental political activities. Yet that has not prevented the publication of valuable analyses of the Canadian cabinet, particularly over the last decade or so.

Such studies have tended to be made through three broad approaches, which are outlined here in turn, followed by observations on some problems in studies of the Canadian cabinet and an indication of the place of this thesis in

that context. Of course the approaches outlined are not mutually exclusive, and this grouping naturally simplifies for purposes of discussion. For example, some of the same concrete problems, such as cabinet size, have been examined from different perspectives³⁹.

The first approach is indirect: learning about the cabinet from studies of other aspects of the political system. Studies of parties and elections, interest group activities, legislatures, federal-provincial relations, and biographies have touched on the cabinet⁴⁰. Taken together they emphasize the cabinet's political environment, and tend to show the limitations upon any cabinet's freedom of action (to the point where a "decline of the Cabinet" is sometimes pointed out⁴¹). Similarly a general text has used a systems perspective to locate the cabinet within its overall, and sometimes overwhelming, context⁴².

The second approach is to assess features of the cabinet in the context of cabinet or parliamentary government. The emphasis may be upon either concrete cabinet problems or explicitly constitutional concerns. It should be noted here that in Canada constitutional writings tend to focus not on cabinet and parliament so much as on the Crown, or (some time ago) upon Canadian autonomy from Britain, or especially upon the federal-provincial balance of powers. There is not in Canada a substantial body of literature which observes particular cabinets at work in order to make

general constitutional observations about their work. Recent proposals to codify some aspects of the cabinet's position in legislation highlighted the slight literature upon what in Britain is "the constitution"⁴³.

Three themes stand out as having been examined by this approach. The first is the general role and functions of the cabinet, particularly with respect to the cabinet as executive and cabinet-legislature relations. This broad perspective is particularly suited to texts⁴⁴. It has also been taken up by some who assess the effects upon the cabinet's role of modern policy science methods⁴⁵, and by some who are concerned with the cabinet's ability to control the administration as a whole⁴⁶.

A second theme is prime ministerial power - upon which Canada has its own vigorous debate⁴⁷. A characteristic of the Canadian debate, however, is a concern with personalities and especially with Prime Minister Trudeau. One author who does trace an historical overview has even felt obliged to emphasize before beginning that "the book is not intended to be an apologia for Pierre Trudeau or his recent predecessors"⁴⁸. The same work treats the question of prime ministerial power as the key to "the way in which policy decisions are made in parliamentary-cabinet systems of government"⁴⁹.

A third theme consists of studies of cabinet personnel and their representativeness, particularly of

provinces and linguistic groups. The "federalization" of the Canadian cabinet is an old theme with continuing application. It was the primary cabinet characteristic emphasized in many past studies of cabinet make-up and cabinet-making⁵⁰. Recent studies tend to refer to broader questions of societal elites⁵¹. Some use this perspective to apply Arend Lijphart's consociational model to Canada⁵². Personnel studies also lend themselves to assessments of personal influence within particular cabinets (again, Trudeau's especially), and sometimes to a certain "inside-dopsterism" of varying utility⁵³.

The third broad approach treats the cabinet as a decision-making system in itself, and makes relatively little reference to traditional concepts of cabinet or parliamentary government. Studies along these lines have applied ideas drawn from organization and public administration theory, and tend to be concerned with cabinet efficiency, with cabinet as coordinator of government policy and departmental administration, and with "managerial microeconomics and bureaucratic politics"⁵⁴. To a degree this approach reflects the interest aroused by Trudeau's systematic formalization of cabinet operations. The approach is by no means wholly new, however. There is a long history of criticisms of cabinet size, of its lack of systematic procedures for many years, and of the undue decision-making burden placed upon it⁵⁵. Royal commissions

on government organization have also tended to see the cabinet primarily in the light of administrative efficiency, where they had the temerity to tackle it at all⁵⁶. A particular theme of this approach is discussion of the portfolio structure and number of departments⁵⁷. Again this has received a stimulus from experiments initiated by Trudeau with Ministries of State of several kinds, with "ministry" versus "departmental" models, and with enhancement of central agencies⁵⁸.

Another approach tends also to treat the cabinet as a decision-making system, but is rapidly developing its own perspective: studies of how individual policies are made and how specific policy areas are treated over time⁵⁹. Though as yet relatively few are scattered among a variety of areas and cases, the accumulation of such studies will contribute to much better informed assessment of the cabinet's position as time goes on.

Studies of cabinet structure have especially taken wing with the increased rate and publicity of cabinet reorganization beginning with Prime Minister Pearson's cabinet and accelerating since then. The view of Doern and Aucoin is that "Since the mid-1960s, ... reorganizations have been utilized at a far greater rate both to achieve governmental coordination and to signal, more visibly, governmental priorities and concern about a particular problem"; "The visible creation of new organizations is

itself a new policy output or instrument"⁶⁰. The amount of literature on the Trudeau cabinet committee system, including important contributions by senior civil servants, is evidence of these developments⁶¹. With two recent changes of government within a year (1979-80), changes in cabinet organization have even outpaced academic commentary upon them. It will be interesting to see whether other perspectives can also be applied to Canadian cabinet decision-making - Sartori's ideas about committees for example, and Headey's construction of "a Minister's-eye view of his job" in Britain⁶².

- Problems

Several related problems must be met in studies of the Canadian cabinet. They have to do with insufficient public information; a focus on personalities; a preoccupation with present concerns; and seeing past cabinets in terms of present concerns.

The first problem is lack of information primarily due to cabinet secrecy. Obviously this is not a new problem nor one restricted to Canada. The traditional view, as stated by Prime Minister Diefenbaker to the House of Commons, was that "The means by which the Cabinet conducts its business are traditionally regarded as its own affair, and questions on the subject are normally neither asked nor answered"⁶³. There has, however, been gradually more officially released information on cabinet organization over

the past fifteen years or so⁶⁴. Prime Minister Clark released cabinet committee membership lists, although Prime Minister Trudeau has not followed his lead. Nevertheless, the basis for analysis of cabinets at work remains fairly thin.

This problem has been aggravated in Canada by a lack of reflective memoirs and other writings by cabinet ministers themselves. Until recently memoirs have not been common, and those there are sometimes have a distinctly self-serving tone⁶⁵. Mostly, and unsurprisingly, they speak of personalities, partisan battles, and policy issues. Canadian figures in public life have not often published their memoirs, and when they do they do not relate their experiences to a general view of cabinet government. There is no Canadian equivalent of the major British political writings by politicians.⁶⁶

A second hazard has been a focus on personalities or at least personnel. This is partly because evidence has often been drawn from people talking, and often talking in personal terms; in turn, those best at obtaining such evidence are usually journalists who produce books with a distinct personal tone⁶⁷. Such books are often fascinating and useful, but they do not aim at analyzing cabinet government. Studies of the Canadian cabinet's personnel and representativeness are important but can only go so far.

A third problem is a tendency to focus upon present structural concerns, squeezing out longer-term perspectives. Partly this is due to the relative lack of historical studies - but then cause and consequences are circular. The tendency also reflects the greater openness in recent years, the greater complexity of government and the issues it faces, the greater experimentation with cabinet structures, and controversy about their effects on the power of parliament and the prime minister. Many studies of the cabinet focus upon its ability to coordinate, to act as a cohesive, corporate body - an issue identified as fundamental to contemporary cabinet structure by practitioners and academics alike⁶⁸. One of the hazards of this focus is identified by Doern:

"the practical meaning of cabinet policy coordination ought not to be viewed in simplistic terms. Coordination is a concept which is dear to the heart of all management reformers. It is always viewed with approval but it is rarely examined in terms of the logic of its meaning in a political and governmental setting. It is precisely in the governmental sector that simplistic managerial notions of what coordination involves, can be [not] only naive but ludicrous".⁶⁹

A final problem flowing from the others is the hazard of seeing past cabinets too much through the spectacles of present concerns, or of using the past as a foil for present ideas. One consequence is errors and disagreements of detail, for example through underestimating the degree of cabinet committee activity before the

committee structure was made more systematic⁷⁰. Moreover, because much interest in the cabinet has followed from the reorganizations of the last few years, perspectives on the past have apparently been influenced by the interpretations of those within government who initiated the changes. Their interpretations are often cast in terms of current problems and as evidence for the changes they have sponsored⁷¹. This problem can affect even works which do take an overview of past cabinets in leading to conclusions about present cabinet issues⁷². Their conclusions are valuable, but their analyses may suffer from the lack of depth of information and other research which they often must accept.

- Approach and Evidence

A general consequence of these problems and of the predominant approaches is that there is not in Canada a solid enough basis of historical and constitutionally-oriented studies upon which to build. This thesis is an attempt to contribute to filling that gap. It therefore aims at contributing a detailed intimacy with the internal workings of two cabinet structures and their continuing problems, and at illuminating the dynamics of working cabinet structures over time and through comparing different cabinets.

This thesis had the advantage of access to the files of the Privy Council Office⁷³. The body of new and concrete information so obtained was the first basis for the

desired exploration in depth. In addition, supplementing, extending and informing the documentary evidence, information was also assembled through a series of interviews with ministers and officials close to the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets. The combination of documentary and oral evidence was essential in order to study working cabinet structure as well as its organizational skeleton. So as to establish and maintain this end the words of those involved are used as far as possible.

The relative lack of depth in Canadian cabinet studies applies with force to the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker periods, when much less information was officially released than today. Public recollections particularly of the controversial Diefenbaker years are still coloured by past disputes. Nevertheless, the existing secondary sources are substantial and varied enough to play a very useful part in expanding and corroborating or questioning documentary and interview information⁷⁴.

It is the sum of this evidence which was examined to provide the detailed account of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures, and which was assessed for the illumination it can throw upon individual responsibility and collective decision-taking in Canadian cabinet structures.

Canadian Influences upon Cabinet Structure

Certain important and specially Canadian influences upon cabinet structure must also be recognized. Their effects recur throughout this study even though it is of the practices of internal cabinet structure rather than of the impact of external forces upon Canadian cabinet government.

Of course much that has influenced the Canadian cabinet is not uniquely Canadian. Constitutionally, Canadian cabinet government is responsible government on the Westminster model, and shares most of the fundamental Westminster conventions and some of its controversies⁷⁵. The British North America Act stated in its preamble that Canada was to have "a Constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom", and summarized the main points of formal constitutional development as of 1867: but much of the Act has to do with Canada's federal constitution. Canada has been influenced by British developments since 1867, and still today both observers and practitioners of government find comparisons helpful⁷⁶.

And Canadian government has been affected by the same kinds of pressures as have touched most western governments over the past several decades. The size and activities of government have expanded, and with them its complexity. Much of the reorganization of Canadian cabinet structures over the past ten or twenty years is attributed

to responses to those changes⁷⁷. The concerns of Pierre Trudeau and Edward Heath have much in common, though their methods were by no means the same⁷⁸.

Naturally the Canadian cabinet has been affected by general Canadian political developments. Hodgetts, for example, has traced their effects upon the ministry's portfolio structure⁷⁹. There have been large and small examples of American influence from the use of the term "Fathers of Confederation" to the replacement by Prime Minister Clark of the title "Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister" with "Chief of Staff"⁸⁰. And of course volumes have been written about Canadian federalism⁸¹: the second fact about the Canadian cabinet is that it is a cabinet of the national government in a relatively decentralized federation. The first fact is still that it is a cabinet in a parliamentary system.

But our concern here is with certain more specific points.

- Structural Distinctions

Canadian cabinet government has its own history dating back well before Confederation. In J.R. Mallory's trenchant words, "Cabinet government is firmly rooted in Canadian political life because it was not imported, but made in Canada"⁸². Indeed, it has been said that Canada's experiences to some extent presaged or influenced British formulations of the principles of responsible government⁸³.

One striking distinction from British practice is that the Canadian cabinet, the ministry, and the operative part of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada are identical in membership (with certain occasional but fleeting exceptions many years ago)⁸⁴, though not of course in function. Without diving into the intricacies of the relationships between the politically-known cabinet and the legally-known Privy Council, it is enough to say with R. MacGregor Dawson that "The cabinet, lacking any legal status of its own, masquerades as the Privy Council when it desires to assume formal powers"⁸⁵: the essential structural point is the identity of cabinet and ministry. The reason is Canada's federal nature, which is reflected in a cabinet representative of provinces, regions and certain sectoral interests (a point to which we will return shortly). Prime ministers have considered banishing some ministers to an outer ministry around the cabinet inner sanctum, but shrank from the political risks involved⁸⁶. One consequence is that pressures to increase the size of the ministry have also resulted in a large cabinet - including 33 ministers in 1980.

Another distinction to be born in mind is that "Generally speaking ministers in Canada have far less wide powers than their counterparts in the United Kingdom. Statute and constitutional custom tend to confer rule-making powers on the Governor-General in Council. Most delegated

legislation and much administrative decision is embodied in Orders in Council"⁸⁷. Partly this is also due to cabinet's representative nature, which persuades ministers to require that delegated legislation should not be left to individual ministers who may not appreciate its regional effects. But it also seems partly to stem from "the early days of responsible government, [when] it was valuable to have a formal record of advice tendered as evidence that the Governor was acting on advice and not on his own discretion as an imperial officer"⁸⁸.

There may be another factor in play. Because the Government of Canada does not exercise the many powers of a local nature which the British government of a unitary state possesses, it may be that there are many fewer instances where delegated powers are obviously such that they should be exercised by a minister rather than by the Governor in Council. Perhaps a larger proportion of Canadian government business is national in effect even if detailed in nature. Though federalism has probably reduced the burden of decision-making on the government as a whole, including the ministry, it is not clear that the burden on the cabinet itself is less than in Britain.

Finally, experience suggests that the requirement to bring so many regulatory matters to cabinet wearing its hat as Council, may also tend to produce a habit of bringing

other matters to cabinet which could otherwise be dealt with by ministers.

- Federalism, Cultures and Representation

It is thus impossible to discuss the Canadian cabinet without speaking about Canadian federalism. What is essential to recognize, however, is that the "federal" rubric encompasses a variety of factors which mutually reinforce the cabinet's representative nature and its consequences. Canadian governments are above all preoccupied with unifying the country, or at least with maintaining as broadly national partisan support as possible.

First of all is Canadian constitutional federalism. But Canadian federalism must not be mistaken for "devolution". The federal government is not a superior government which has bestowed powers on the provincial governments⁸⁹. They are legally and regard themselves politically as sovereign within their own jurisdictional spheres⁹⁰.

Second is the intensity of regional feelings, which it is difficult to overestimate⁹¹. Similarly strong feelings support provincial identities, and there are areas of each province which consider themselves distinctly different. None fancies itself justly without representation in the federal and "federalized" cabinet. One of the most prominent Canadian characteristics is a deep suspicion that one's own province is being dispossessed by all the

rest. Canadian regional cultures are guarded jealously; they are not just tendencies within a national culture. These feelings do not necessarily depend on objective socio-cultural differences, though certainly such differences exist. And the clearly distinctive example of Quebec serves as a constant reminder to every other province of its own confident distinctiveness.

Third is the important distinction between the francophone and anglophone linguistic communities. The distinction has been a central cultural and political force throughout Canadian history⁹². It is not a matter simply of Quebec contrasted to the other provinces, since there is a "French fact" in other provinces (though Quebec vastly strengthens and symbolizes French-Canadian culture). The federal cabinet must reflect this reality too in its personnel and its business (which is now bilingual).

Fourth are the dozens of other ethnic communities which also jealously guard their heritage as a living centre of their identities not just as folklore⁹³. The numbers involved are more than significant and are often concentrated. Toronto, for example, considers itself the fifth largest Italian city in the world. And the native peoples form even more distinct communities. The cabinet includes Ministers of Indian Affairs and of "Multiculturalism" - though both communities were less apparent in the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker years.

Finally, the elemental force of geography should not be forgotten. The scale of Canada instills in all of us a sense of space and separateness which even modern communications and mobility have not erased. It must affect the cabinet's sense of community when ministers feel obliged to spend most weekends in their constituencies sometimes a thousand or more miles from Ottawa.

Class is given relatively little chance as a basis for political mobilization⁹⁴.

The impact of this complex of forces upon the cabinet is well known⁹⁵ and will be noted throughout this study. The cabinet is "federalized"; even at the worst balkanized. "Cabinet building ... is an elaborate exercise in the politics of representation"⁹⁶. This representation principle applies not only to provinces and regions but to areas within provinces, to linguistic representation, to an urban-rural balance, to ethnic groups, religions (less so today), in recent years to sex (if not yet sexual preference, as far as is known), and to important policy interests which demand representation by portfolios of "their own" such as Labour, Small Business, Fisheries, Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, even Amateur Sports. All ministers have a very real responsibility to make their representative capacities effective, a responsibility which cross-cuts portfolios. There is even a 1904 order in council which notes that

"In the case of members of the Cabinet, while all have an equal degree of responsibility in a constitutional sense, yet in the practical working out of responsible government in a country of such vast extent as Canada, it is found necessary to attach a special responsibility to each Minister for the public affairs of the province or district with which he has close political connection, and with which his colleagues may not be so well acquainted"⁹⁷.

The effects are various. Ministers are not chosen for talents alone by any means. The representation principle tends to increase cabinet size in itself, and certainly has a multiplier effect on increases for other reasons. It makes it extremely difficult politically to reduce cabinet size. Collective decision-taking is reinforced. The prime minister is strengthened because he may be the only really national figure in the cabinet and because more must come under his eye as chairman of cabinet; but he is also weakened by the regional political strengths of other ministers (whom he may have no choice but to include in his cabinet) and by the probable inability to be a similarly attractive leader to all regions.

It is, if anything, an understatement to say that the essence of a Canadian cabinet is diversity.

- Parties and the Party System⁹⁸

One factor which mitigates this diversity, however, is the nature of Canadian political parties (or at least of the two main parties). They are not ideological, and ideological differences are not so prominent as tends to

be the case in Britain. The parliamentary parties may include tendencies of wide variety (often with regional connotations), but not organized factions like the Bow, Monday, or Tribune groups⁹⁹. Major Canadian parties focus on national integration, on brokerage among regions, on developing electoral strength through straddling the political centre. Liberals traditionally worry that the Conservatives may just barely outflank them on the centre left. Trudeau set the Liberal Party course for, in his words, the "radical centre" and the "extreme middle" of the Canadian political spectrum¹⁰⁰. For good or for bad, in policy terms the Conservatives and Liberals tend to be department-store parties, offering as many things to as many people as possible.

Partly in consequence, there is a long-standing tendency to personalize politics and focus on party leadership before issues. It is an old slogan that "our platform is our leader, and our leader is our platform"¹⁰¹.

Strong regional differences in interests, attitudes and political perspectives also affect the party system. What is radical in, say, Nova Scotia is middle of the road in Saskatchewan. The parties prominent at the provincial level are not always the same as those prominent nationally in the same province. Even when the party names are the same the organizations and attitudes may be quite distinct, though this was much less the case in the

St. Laurent and Diefenbaker years. Political careers do not often lead from provincial to national politics.

The first-past-the-post electoral system also appears to foster a regional disequilibrium of parliamentary representation greater than the actual disequilibrium of popular support¹⁰². There is a certain bias in favour of regionally based third parties. These points, and the difficulty of one party winning support in every region, have contributed to producing minority governments. Indeed the Diefenbaker victory in 1957 began a trend which has seen minority government in half of the twelve Parliaments since 1949. Moreover, the Liberals have been much more successful than the Conservatives in building national support, helped by a solid base in Quebec. Canada has had a Liberal national government for twenty-eight of the thirty-five years since World War II, and non-Liberal government for only twenty-two years this century. A consequence of major significance for both the Diefenbaker Conservative cabinet and the Clark Conservative cabinet sixteen years afterwards has been their ministers' lack of governmental experience¹⁰³.

With this background, the unique features of Canadian cabinet structure should make more sense than if considered only as one example of cabinet government on the Westminster model. Yet even the uniqueness of Canadian cabinet government cannot easily be labelled in the style of

the "Westminster model" or the "Canberra model". Canada is so much a "federal state and a plural society"¹⁰⁴ that the idea of an "Ottawa model" of cabinet government strikes Canadian ears strangely.

II CANADIAN CABINET STRUCTURE TO 1948

For many years Canadian cabinet structure consisted mainly of the cabinet itself and ministers' informal relationships. There was not much interest in cabinet organization. The "informality and unbusinesslike conduct of cabinet affairs"¹ which was a striking characteristic of the Canadian cabinet until the Second World War (Canada was one war behind the U.K.) was believed necessary to the secrecy attached to collective responsibility. The cabinet was a very conservative body, and "for many decades after 1867 [it] contrived to worry along and to conduct its affairs under conditions which made careful deliberation difficult and quick informed decision well-nigh impossible" - though no doubt "broad political benefits... were deemed more important than efficiency".²

This is not to say there was no thought given to cabinet structure nor any organization at all besides cabinet itself. But the main structural concern appeared to be cabinet's size in relation to the imperative that it be representative. In 1867 Prime Minister Macdonald's formation of the first Canadian ministry nearly foundered partly because he thought a cabinet of more than 13 would be pretty nearly "so large as to be unworkable".³ These associated concerns with size and representative balance have persisted ever since.

A Privy Council Office carried over from the old United Province of Canada, but its functions were largely those of registering orders in council. Its head was truly a "clerk" (his title) and did not attend cabinet.

Also in 1867, as one of the first acts of the new government a Treasury Board was established "designed to serve as a committee of Cabinet on matters of finance, accounting and general administration".⁴ The Board was the only cabinet committee for many years, was given a statutory basis in 1869, consisted of the Minister of Finance and five other ministers, and gradually took on responsibilities and authority which in Britain were concentrated in the Chancellor of the Exchequer rather than being put into a commission of ministers.

For some time, however, the Board "was in fact relatively inactive", meeting "monthly or less often" and concerning itself with "matters of detail such as reclassification of positions, travel and removal expenses, and grants of superannuation".⁵ Under the influence of depression economies, beginning in 1931⁶, the Treasury Board's authority was augmented and its activity increased in line with "a steady centralization of executive control over public finance" and "a general tightening of control over various administrative procedures"⁷. The pressures of war persuaded cabinet to leave even more to the Board (until then most supply contracts still required cabinet

approval). Though great, the Board's powers applied to matters of detail rather than policy: as Louis St. Laurent (then Minister of Justice) said in 1945, "Treasury Board minutes deal almost entirely with appointments, resignations, and other personnel matters in the civil service; with payments to firms and persons for services rendered; with remissions of taxes, and the like"⁸.

That was essentially the position in 1948. A fundamental statutory revision passed in 1951 established the Treasury Board's functions for the rest of our period, although to a degree the changes put upon a clearer foundation already existing practices of delegation to the Board. The Financial Administration Act of 1951 defined the Board as "a committee of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada" acting "on all matters relating to finance, revenues, estimates, expenditures and financial commitments, accounts establishments, the terms and conditions of employment of persons in the public service, and general administrative policy in the public service".⁹ In sum the Treasury Board exercised extensive financial powers as - to borrow the formulation of a recent Secretary to the Board - "the cabinet's Committee on the Expenditure Budget and the cabinet's Committee on Management".¹⁰ Until 1966, however, "Because the Minister of Finance chaired the Board and reported to the cabinet on its behalf and because the staff of the Treasury Board were under his jurisdiction, progressive

extensions of Treasury Board powers tended to become extensions of the powers of the Department of Finance"¹¹. The Board dealt essentially with details, but so pervasively that its Secretary in 1971 noted it "came in the minds of public servants to be like Kafka's Castle - amorphous, inaccessible, and powerful"¹². We will return to the Treasury Board's position in St. Laurent's and Diefenbaker's cabinet structures. For the moment we must go back to 1867.

Cabinet structure remained for decades generally as it was in 1867, though certainly cabinet's size grew. The 1896 Laurier ministry included 14 cabinet ministers and three ministers not of the cabinet (two of whom were brought into the cabinet within a year). The 1920 Meighen cabinet consisted of 17 ministers, the 1921 King cabinet of 19, and the 1940 King cabinet of 18.

Not everyone was complacent about the state of cabinet organization, however. In 1912 Sir George Murray submitted a critical report:

"Nothing has impressed me so much...as the almost intolerable burden which the present system of transacting business imposes on Ministers themselves. They both have too much to do and do too much. Speaking broadly, it may be said that every act of the Executive Government, or of any member of it, requires the sanction of the Governor-in-Council which, under present practice, is identical with the Cabinet...Almost every decision of a Minister, even of the most trivial importance, is thus - at least in theory - brought before his colleagues for the purpose of obtaining their collective approval, which is necessary for its validity."¹³

Murray recommended a "division of labour and devolution of power"¹⁴; he proposed establishing a ministerial committee to approve routine business and delegating more powers to individual ministers - but no action was taken on either point for years to come.

During the First World War¹⁵ two important cabinet committees functioned but lapsed with peace. Another, the Privy Council Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research, was set up in 1916 and continued on the books but inactive. After the War a Senate Committee report¹⁶ endorsed the Murray Report and drew attention to the Haldane Report and British practice, yet even so pre-war practices returned.

Until World War II the transaction of cabinet business was haphazard¹⁷ - without agenda, minutes, secretary, or scheduled meetings. Nearly everything depended on the prime minister's own style (prime ministerial power is nothing new: Prime Minister Bennett held several senior portfolios at once and the story was told that he held cabinet meetings while walking down the street by himself). Prime Minister King simply went round the table to his right asking each minister in turn if he had anything to bring up. Some organizational elaboration was undertaken in the middle and later 'thirties - a Cabinet Wheat Committee was set up in 1935 to advise in respect of the Canadian Wheat Board, and a Cabinet Defence Committee was formed in 1936

(but apparently was not active for long). Perhaps a cabinet secretariat was less evidently necessary than in Britain where a two-tier ministry and cabinet committees had been employed for some time. Yet when Arnold Heeney was preparing to inaugurate a cabinet secretariat early in the Second World War he found it hard "to understand how such a regime could function at all"¹⁸.

It took that war to bring about major reforms in cabinet organization¹⁹. The old methods collapsed under wartime burdens (over 90,000 orders-in-council were passed during the war). In 1940 a Cabinet Business Committee was set up to deal with routine orders-in-council (as Murray had suggested). Cabinet committees became a major part of wartime structure: in 1939 ten committees were set up, and other special committees were established from time to time, with related committees of officials (usually called interdepartmental committees in Canada). Most of these committees fell into disuse during the war, but one stood out: the Cabinet War Committee. It was "in form, purely advisory," but the needs of the time and the prestige and authority of its members - not formal delegation of authority to the committee - meant that "its decisions were for practical purposes the decisions of the Government"²⁰. To all intents and purposes it replaced the cabinet.

But more important in the long run was the accompanying establishment of a cabinet secretariat.

Influenced by British practice, Prime Minister King had for some years contemplated appointing "a Canadian Hankey".²¹ In 1938 Arnold Heeney was recruited to King's office with this prospect in view and in 1940 he was appointed Canada's first Secretary to the Cabinet as well as Clerk of the Privy Council. The new office was established simply by order-in-council, unlike most Canadian departments which have a statutory basis. The 1940 order is still the charter for the functioning of the P.C.O.²² Its content leaned on British practice and advice, as well as on the Senate Committee Report of 1919²³. It assigned to the Secretary responsibility, "under the direction of the Prime Minister", for "duties of a secretarial nature relating principally to the collecting and putting into shape of agenda of Cabinet meetings, the providing of information and material necessary for the deliberations of the Cabinet and the drawing up of records of the results for communication to the departments concerned" - duties which for the most part "had no parallel in the days prior to its establishment"²⁴. In fact these duties were first applied only to the War Committee. The development of rules and procedures "was essentially a pragmatic process, involving much trial and error, particularly at first. The object was an uncomplicated practical regime of procedure combining flexibility and precision and capable of enabling Ministers to deal with a heavy volume of important business promptly and

efficiently"²⁵. The same object has been in view ever since. Even thirty years ago, however, the duties of the Cabinet Secretary came to involve "a good deal beyond the strictly 'secretarial' role, though still within the ambit of 'Cabinet business'."²⁶

To some extent this new system was despite King: he was interested in power not organization, and had thought of the cabinet secretary in terms of a "personal staff officer" of a more political type than Heeney persuaded him was required. "Here, as in other organizational changes effected during his administration, his primary, if unacknowledged, objective was to enhance his authority as Prime Minister by strengthening the means of its exercise"; but, "bit by bit, he felt compelled to approve...in order to get things done" of procedures which "were bound to limit in some degree the kind of personal management to which he was accustomed and at which he was a past master"²⁷. By 1945, however, the new methods and organization were indispensable.

Moreover, long before the war was over and perhaps influenced by the bent towards sweeping change which infused reconstruction planning, the P.C.O.'s chief officers (Heeney and his second, John Baldwin) were considering various alternatives for post-war cabinet organization²⁸. Despite the pressures of war, this probably was the period of the most reflection and planning about structures for some

twenty years. Questions such as the "redefinition" of the role of the Treasury Board were considered which were not to be more fully dealt with until the report of the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization of the early 1960's. The more adventurous or ambitious ideas were not followed up, but the establishment of a cabinet structure very different from its pre-war ancestor was planned and implemented.

The primacy of the whole cabinet was restored with the 1945 abolition of the War Committee and the decision not to establish another formal inner cabinet. The organizational system which had served the War Committee was applied to the cabinet. Procedures were formally outlined in the document entitled "Meetings of Ministers During the Parliamentary Session; Procedure", first circulated in 1945²⁹, but the new structure involved more than that.

The use of cabinet committees was not allowed to lapse. The wartime committees were abolished but a new series of cabinet committees gradually came into being reflecting the problems of the day. Several had to do with the aftermath of war (Reconstruction, Demobilization, the Mutual Aid Board). Others with more enduring aims were retained - Treasury Board of course, the Government Business Committee (now the Special Committee of Council), Wheat, the Privy Council Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research, and a new Cabinet Defence Committee which

inherited some of the importance and activity of the War Committee. Ad hoc committees were used more often as well, and the various scattered committees were treated more uniformly. Procedures similar to the cabinet's (if watered down) were gradually applied to more and more cabinet committees. The committees came commonly to be served by interdepartmental committees and frequently attended by officials.

The use of committees was still far from systematic, and apparently became progressively less so beyond the first few months of reorganization. The cabinet was far and away the major focus; only a few committees even formally had executive authority as Privy Council Committees and of them before long only Treasury Board seriously exercised it; and by far most committees were ad hoc in nature and haphazard in use. A 1948³⁰ list gave the names of 21 cabinet committees, but the practical existence and functioning of most seemed questionable or insecure - one official could only suggest referring an issue to a particular committee "if that Committee were functioning or if a meeting could be arranged"³¹, and another committee's membership was "not clearly defined at present"³². But though most cabinet committees were not major policy-making forces and their existence and operation were unclear, still their use was now well-known and accepted.

The P.C.O. itself was a fundamental part of cabinet structure, and was working to establish its position more firmly by "justifying its usefulness to departments"³³ in work at the interdepartmental level and in communicating necessary information between cabinet and officials. The small wartime staff (fewer than ten) was carried over, and its numbers grew with P.C.O.'s widened duties (though most staff were on loan from other departments)³⁴. As was written at the time,

"The combined Privy Council Office and Cabinet Secretariat form a separate department of the Government. It is unique, however, in that it has no direct executive responsibilities for the administration of Government policy. It is, therefore, a 'neutral' department designed to be of assistance in bringing business before Cabinet and its committees and in ensuring that Cabinet decisions are communicated to those responsible for their execution."³⁵

The P.C.O. still had to work hard at getting ministers and departments into the habits of using the P.C.O. and the new procedures, but the principle was nonetheless established that "The Privy Council Office has general responsibility for the operation of the central executive machinery of the government"³⁶. It was in this capacity that the P.C.O. had looked forward to a better and more regular organization of cabinet's work. By 1948, however, even Baldwin had raised

"the question of whether further formalization of our method of supervision and allocation of work is either practical or desirable"³⁷. The cabinet structure St. Laurent inherited in 1948 was a great improvement over its pre-war antecedents, but it was still clearly informal, flexible, and even rudimentary. Nevertheless, the basis for subsequent developments was there.

PART II:

THE ST. LAURENT CABINET

III SETTING

The Political Situation¹

Many Canadians subscribe, in casual conversation, to certain preconceptions about Louis St. Laurent's cabinet: He performed as an avuncular chairman of a cabinet resembling a corporate board. The cabinet was dominated by its "minister of everything", C.D. Howe. Ministers were in the hands of their able but too powerful civil service. Much of this is smoke, but there is fire too. And questions of cabinet structure are clearly invoked.

- Transition, Election and Government

St. Laurent was King's chosen successor. He won the leadership by a large margin at the Liberal convention in August 1948, but only gradually took over from King so that his swearing-in on November 15 did not mark a sudden change in government. St. Laurent wished to "continue to move forward in the direction we have been travelling"². He emphasized continuity by retaining King's cabinet intact, only filling three vacancies (one of them with another King protégé, L.B. Pearson, before the changeover). The first business was to complete work begun by King and St. Laurent together: Newfoundland entered Confederation 1 April 1949, and its representative entered the cabinet the same day. An election came next: from a parliamentary majority of only

five, and faced by a new and energetic Conservative leader (George Drew of Ontario), this seemed no mere formality.

The Liberals campaigned on their record, boasting successful post-war reconstruction and economic prosperity topped by a large budgetary surplus. There were, said St. Laurent, "no outstanding issues in this election"³. Except perhaps the merits of the respective leaders⁴: St. Laurent swept those stakes as "Uncle Louis" conveying reassurance, benevolence, and competence. On June 27 it was a Liberal sweep: 193 seats with 49% of the vote, compared to the Conservatives' 41 seats with 30%, leaving the socialist Cooperative Commonwealth Federation 13 seats, Social Credit 10 and "Others" 5.

In the next few years the St. Laurent government administered the country confidently and economically "as", said his biographer accurately enough, "an efficient, unified team".⁵ They managed the rudimentary welfare state with a businesslike stance, establishing the Liberal party across the broad political centre. Their accomplishments were solid. They successfully met the Korean War effort and its inflationary economic aftermath. The government's projects included the Trans-Canada Highway begun, the St. Lawrence Seaway nearly so, federal-provincial tax and pensions agreements, and constitutional settlements - even a first Canadian Governor General. St. Laurent was older - seventy-one in 1953 - but decided to fight another

election. There was no great programme for the future to present, but a slump in the government's political fortunes had been repaired by summer 1953 and an election was called for August 10. The leaders, the issues, the political and economic environments were similar to 1949: "Perhaps no two successive elections have had so much in common"⁶. The electorate was not excited - judging by the drop in turnout from 74% to 67% - but "Uncle Louis" led a stroll to re-election. The Liberals won 171 seats with 49% of the vote, the Conservatives 51 with 31%, the C.C.F. 23, Social Credit 15, and others 5.

- Decline, Dispute and Change

The cabinet intended to proceed as it had before, but its composition, its abilities, and its surroundings were changing. The most constructive ideas seemed to have been enacted already. Even J.W. Pickersgill, a partisan former Liberal minister, has admitted "the government had nothing new or spectacular to present to Parliament" in 1955⁷. The retirement in 1954 of two of the most able and senior ministers, Douglas Abbott and Brooke Claxton, was a serious loss. St. Laurent was unable adequately to replace either, a sign of his and the government's decline. He himself was aging and never fully recovered from a strenuous 1954 round-the-world trip. The whole government was growing set in its ways, overconfident of its virtues and certain of a right to rule. The process was gradual, and ministers

were not wholly blind to their declining popularity, but they were still complacent⁸.

Two parliamentary rows were the bench-marks. Both revealed St. Laurent's slackening grip (which was noticeable only periodically, however, rather than steadily or completely) and in both the leading figure was the minister least sensitive to political winds and public sentiments - C.D. Howe. In mid-1955 the government's amendments to the Defence Production Act, involving an extension of extraordinary powers enacted for the Korean War, met with a filibuster which gave Drew "his first major victory in the Commons"⁹. This proved merely a prelude to the astonishingly insensitive bulling through parliament of the Northern Ontario Pipeline Crown Corporation Act in mid-1956. The content of the bill was forgotten in disputes over higher principles of parliamentary democracy: the government's image was grievously damaged. St. Laurent had hardly taken part at all: his decline became a public display. He was persuaded to fight just one more campaign, but it was a mistake. St. Laurent was not alone in what Pickersgill admits was "a growing remoteness from the public"¹⁰. Prosperity there was, but not as there had been; Canadians were uneasy without brave new directions or ideas from their government; the government's characteristics and members were dated; and opposing them was a new and inspiring Conservative leader. The divide was symbolized and

exaggerated by the new tool of television - St. Laurent disliked it and showed badly, but John Diefenbaker made it his own.

The election of June 10, 1957, was a political watershed: though the Liberals retained 41% of the vote and 105 seats, the Conservatives won 112 seats with 39%. The prime minister's resignation ended twenty-two years of Liberal government.

Character of the Government

The government's aging contributed significantly to its defeat and brought out its weakest sides, but they were still sides of more general characteristics which marked the government throughout. Despite the great changes of wartime and reconstruction it was a time of small government compared to today. Government seemed less complex as well as less comprehensive. More importantly it was a time of smaller government aspirations and expectations: it would be ridiculous to forget the crises of war and cold war and the battles of domestic policy and federal-provincial relations, but still participants believe that the pace of events was more leisurely then and that these were easier years for a government¹¹. The relatively sweeping initiatives of reconstruction were over. The international economy was prosperous. The government's complacency was not without grounds in its situation, but towards the end of

the 'fifties attitudes were changing - and the government was not.

- Conservative

The St. Laurent government was conservative in its attitudes to governing, consistent with its times. This was less an ideological conservatism - though there was that too - than a practical one. The St. Laurent ministers were pragmatists who saw themselves as charged primarily with keeping the country on an even keel, as a participant put it¹², rather than giving inspiring leadership. This did not preclude energetic actions or substantial accomplishments but they were accomplishments of a conservative rather than a reformist outlook. Liberal electoral success - five election victories in a row, two under St. Laurent - encouraged this outlook, but that success was also endangered by it. This conservatism was reflected in the government's attitudes to its own structure. There, too, accomplishments were pragmatic not planned, piecemeal rather than sweeping. The attitude was typified by the comment of J.W. Pickersgill as a new Secretary to the Cabinet: "I don't want to be a new broom but I do want to do what I should"¹³.

- Managerial

In keeping with these attitudes, this was a managerial government. Its process of policy-making progressed predominantly 'from the bottom up' in

incrementalist fashion rather than 'from the top down' following an agreed set of priorities on a rationalist model. All governments operate this way to varying degrees, of course, but it particularly characterized the St. Laurent government's structures. As one official wrote, "a problem moves from its point of origin up to Cabinet"¹⁴. A senior minister recalled that most policies and legislation were not so much requested as simply emerged from departments¹⁵. The speech from the throne - whatever public ballyhoo was made over it - was in its formulation a "pretty routine document"¹⁶: it was a seed catalogue not a programme.

A second aspect of the government's managerial character was its relatively great reliance upon its civil service - certainly more than is acceptable or fashionable today. It was not so much that the administrators really ran the government, but that the government saw its own function as administering the country. It was essentially a problem-solving government, not one of grand policy concepts. Its members were not simply prosaic men (some were able, energetic and inquiring) nor were its achievements negligible, but however well and early it responded to problems and however effective its solutions, it was within a reactive frame of referencel¹⁷. It was all very business-like. St. Laurent even viewed elections as a matter of having "to submit our accounts to you every few years"¹⁸.

But by 1957 that was no way to face a great political visionary, John Diefenbaker.

- Flexibility and Informality

Within its managerial outlook and structures, however - and partly because of them - this was not a bureaucratic government. It was characterized by flexibility and informality rather than procedural red tape or rigidity. The cabinet managed the nation's business, but as politicians not bureaucrats. It was a government that saw "no point in uniformity for the sake of uniformity"¹⁹, sought "ways around the theoretical to accomplish the practical"²⁰, and showed a "reluctance on the part of some to consent to what is regarded as unnecessary 'formalization'"²¹. Ministers saw the need for order, as one put it, but would never "let the rules rule you"²². On the other hand, the necessary rules they had were neither systematic nor effective enough even as they checked the worst irregularities. In this system of limited adhocery, "flexibility in method"²³ carried the danger of declining into disarray.

Machinery and organization were not forgotten - in fact there were notable improvements and a gradual development towards greater structural regularity (due partly to a certain exhaustion in the last years) - but structure was meant to reflect and mobilize a concern not with the aims of organization but with "if it worked"²⁴.

Cabinet structure was meant to operate in an orderly fashion but without much formal machinery or much rigour in the machinery there was. Informal adjustments often took the place of formal structural changes, and formal changes not infrequently foundered. The more formal institutions of cabinet committees and even cabinet itself were never made into a regulated or comprehensive system. Cabinet machinery sometimes seemed to serve mainly as a convenient framework for and manifestation of the informal patterns of ministerial relations.

Structures were supposed, within limits, to suit the personal characteristics of ministers both as men and politicians. Organization was a tool of ministers not their master: it should use their peculiarities not oppose them. It was recognized and accepted, for example²⁵, that some ministers would be more important than the rest, that relatively few would really originate important policy, that the ranges and abilities of ministers would differ substantially, but that everyone had his pride and his political significance. These inevitable realities of politics and politicians were important ingredients of the St. Laurent cabinet structure. Its informality was meant to match and use them. St. Laurent himself demonstrated his government's emphasis upon individuals and specific accomplishments rather than machinery and plans when he began his first campaign as prime minister saying "people

vote for men they have confidence in rather than party programmes"26.

- Individuals and Individual Responsibility

Quite characteristically, then, the keynote of the St. Laurent cabinet structure's functioning was the significance of ministers' individual responsibilities. Equally characteristically, they were embodied less in procedures or formal institutions than in customs or norms of behaviour. The St. Laurent ministers believed in the existence of and an emphasis on clear, undiffused responsibilities27. If Ministers were to act responsibly and be held responsible as they should be, it was felt, they had to have leeway to do their job as they saw fit. They expected, therefore, that as a principle of good cabinet government and as a routine practice of their government each minister should, as one of them said, "look after his own bailiwick" as far as possible without concerning himself with others' "bailiwicks"28.

C.D. Howe seemed "minister of everything" not because he dictated to his colleagues but because he was given wide responsibilities to match his abilities. The important area of informal ministerial relations was similarly oriented: relatively great ministerial autonomy marked this cabinet, and ministerial relations were vital to its structure.

The St. Laurent ministers certainly recognized the ultimate pre-eminence and demands of collective responsibility and collective decision-taking. Obviously the

government's collective dependence on and responsibility to parliament was constantly before them: if they let one be politically hanged, all would feel the shadow of the noose. Certainly ministers recognized that their departmental functions could overlap, that they were cross-cut in particular by the representative nature of the Canadian cabinet, and that ministers had to share scarce governmental resources. And of course the cabinet was the institution which embodied their collective responsibility. Cabinet structure reflected these facts. But St. Laurent and his ministers saw no basic conflict between an emphasis upon individual responsibility and the collective necessities of cabinet government. The best political and governmental results for all of them were believed to depend more upon individual action than collective decision-taking. Naturally, then, "they believed cabinet structure was not as important as the people who operated it"²⁹. As one concerned said, "the personal factor was high, the mechanical factor low"³⁰.

These ideas marked the structures and practices of the St. Laurent cabinet. The characteristics of a managerial government of some unpretentious orderliness and a flexibility in method were consistent with a structure oriented around individual responsibility and operated by customs more than written procedural rules.

Personnel

- Experience³¹

The St. Laurent ministers probably had more attitudes and experiences in common than most cabinets. Their most striking shared characteristic was their experience in government. The average ministerial experience of the 1949 cabinet was nearly five years. Only two ministers of twenty were without federal cabinet experience, and one of them had been a provincial premier. Moreover, they were experienced together - they knew government and they knew each other. Their attitudes to governing were generally similar, homogenized by years of shared political battle and personal rubbing along. This factor was a vital one in the functioning of the cabinet and in its striking harmony (relative to many Canadian cabinets) as well as in its later decline. By 1957 their experience together was even more pronounced; the average ministerial experience of the 1957 cabinet was over eight years.

Ministers' experience supported the importance they gave to individual responsibilities. In 1949 most of them had already proven themselves and established a status of their own before St. Laurent became prime minister. This was enhanced over the years as they remained ministers, for after the first year or so St. Laurent apparently followed a deliberate policy of continuity of personnel which encouraged stability in the character of the cabinet. The

continuity was remarkable for a Canadian cabinet: only 34 different ministers served over the eight and one-half years, an average service in this government alone of over five years. Ten of the final twenty-one ministers survived from the original twenty, and they occupied the more senior portfolios. Seven ministers served in the same portfolio throughout, including such notables as Howe in Trade and Commerce, Garson in Justice, Gardiner in Agriculture, Pearson in External Affairs, and Martin in Health and Welfare. Even the average tenure of a minister in one portfolio was high - close to four years³². Perhaps a certain complacency is reflected in these figures.

There was also continuity in the structure of cabinet membership. The cabinet's size remained at twenty most of the time, varying to nineteen and twenty-one (compared to its British contemporary of 18 with a much larger ministry³³). Interestingly, there was "an impression that if the Cabinet gets beyond the size of twenty it is somewhat unwieldy"³⁴. The tradition that all ministers be in the cabinet was followed. Every minister had a portfolio responsibility or the equivalent (even the successive Ministers without Portfolio being actually Government Leaders in the Senate), although for lengthy periods one minister might hold two portfolios. Several new portfolios were created and old ones (dating from war and reconstruction years) were abolished, notably in 1950 and in response

to the Korean War, but this did not disturb the overall pattern of consistency. Such changes did not reflect a broad organizational perspective distinct from the substantive responsibilities of the portfolios themselves, unlike many of the portfolio changes of the Trudeau years which were related to theories of coordination and policy development³⁵.

The St. Laurent cabinet also maintained a balance among languages (with 1/4 francophone, 3/4 anglophone) and among regions similar to the proportions in the population at large and in line with convention (with roughly 1/3 Ontario, under 1/3 Quebec, and over 1/3 the rest: Ontario had one more minister than Quebec, as usual, each other province had one, except Prince Edward Island and - a change - British Columbia which gained a second minister).

- Individuals³⁶

But men are not just figures. Experience and continuity could not preclude ministerial divisions by the normal ambitions, interests, and differences. Each minister filled his responsibilities differently from his colleagues. Moreover in every cabinet there are a few who tend to dominate the rest, and St. Laurent's was no exception.

C.D. Howe, Minister of Trade and Commerce and of Defence Production, not to speak of agencies like the Wheat Board, has become something of a mythical symbol of

executive arrogance in Canada. Certainly he was the most influential minister, with wide economic development responsibilities and a reputation even with political enemies for immense ability and energy. Howe did not have the national political base to be an anglophone equivalent of the chief French-Canadian lieutenants English-speaking prime ministers often recognized, but St. Laurent valued Howe to the extent that "it was clear from the start that C.D. Howe would be senior in prestige as well as in precedence and that St. Laurent intended him to be almost a partner in the leadership"³⁷. In his own field Howe was almost the czar of government relations with business and industrial development. He also had a general interest and influence outside his portfolio probably greater than any of his colleagues, but even he usually hesitated to interfere too far and accepted St. Laurent's firm arbitration³⁸. And his limitations were well known: few (certainly not St. Laurent) took him as an outstanding judge of politics or public opinion. As a millionaire businessman without any 'feel' for parliament he epitomized the managerial approach of the government, and his political and parliamentary indiscretions cost the government dearly. But with St. Laurent's decline and the retirement of Abbott and Claxton, his voice was too much listened to because of the absence of others' strength as much as his own stubborn force. Pickersgill rightly emphasized that "it was not until 1955

that the myth was created that Howe dominated the Cabinet and St. Laurent was a mere figurehead"³⁹.

Douglas Abbott, Minister of Finance until 1954, was another central figure in the government. He was a strong and able minister of a traditionally powerful department. He stood very firmly on his broad ministerial prerogatives but was willing to compromise with colleagues rather than try to impose upon them. His position was enhanced as the minister who "would have been prime minister if St. Laurent wasn't"⁴⁰, by his close relationship with St. Laurent "such as has rarely existed between Prime Ministers and Ministers of Finance"⁴¹, and by his notable political acumen, but he was not a great originator of policy. His loss was a serious one, as was that of Brooke Claxton.

Claxton was Minister of National Defence, particularly important in those years, but he was especially valuable as a man of inventive and energetic mind and political perspicacity. His talents were put to work in his designated position as cabinet's link with the party organization⁴² - their chief political organizer and consultant in effect, and one with considerable authority over party operations.

Lester Pearson too ranked high, as an increasingly renowned minister of the second traditionally powerful department, with wide contacts in his previous civil service

habitat, and enjoying an exceptionally "close relationship and identity of views" with St. Laurent⁴³. While paramount (with the prime minister) in his own field, however, he was not a strongly political minister and his influence seldom went beyond his portfolio, except in one or two areas of personal expertise such as cultural affairs.

Walter Harris should have been a major power and nearly was - he was Abbott's successor in Finance, House Leader as well, a very close friend of St. Laurent's, and heir apparent it seemed to some. However, he was never as dominant as Abbott in his portfolio, he suffered from trying to fill two heavy jobs, and some colleagues apparently denigrated him as something of a "teachers's pet"⁴⁴. His political talent, judging by his performance as House Leader from 1955 on, was not up to scratch.

J.W. Pickersgill played a unique role. He was an inveterate political operator as, in turn, head of the Prime Minister's Office ("clear it with Jack" had been a byword since King's days); then Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet; and then - "I've ceased to be an informed source and now I'm a cabinet leak"⁴⁵ - a cabinet minister. His actual portfolio, Secretary of State, was not at first as important as his role as political liaison with the party (succeeding Claxton), his position as the leading Atlantic minister, and his close relations with St. Laurent. He was appointed a minister so that St. Laurent

could "feel free to call upon him as a junior minister to assist me"⁴⁶. This friendship, with Pickersgill's intelligence, political role, experience and all-around brass, led him quite far from his portfolio sometimes, but this influence gradually declined as he became more absorbed by his ministerial duties. Moreover, other limits to his position are revealing of the cabinet's nature: his wider activities had to be circumspect and not "too pushy" to be acceptable, he spread himself too thinly to move mountains, and as a political official he was a "fixer" not a power.

Stuart Garson was Minister of Justice. He had an original mind, and as a former premier of Manitoba had a particular understanding of domestic policy, especially federal-provincial relations (which suited his portfolio well), but - Pickersgill says - did not quite fulfill his promise⁴⁷. Paul Martin was an able and astute Minister of National Health and Welfare, another of the originators in the cabinet, with a position somewhat enhanced by his fluency in cabinet discussions and a good relationship with St. Laurent. The quietly competent Chevrier of Transport was another who was personally close to St. Laurent, but as was the case with most ministers his influence adhered mainly to his portfolio.

The others, as Pickersgill says, were "much less influential"⁴⁸. Jimmy Gardiner loomed large publicly as former premier of Saskatchewan and ruler of its notorious

Liberal political apparatus, and as a senior and outspoken Minister of Agriculture, but he had his differences with St. Laurent. His influence within the cabinet was gradually and tacitly limited in response to his refusal to adhere to some of the customs of dealings with his colleagues. He 'owned' Agriculture narrowly defined, but he was once reduced to asking the C.C.F. premier of Saskatchewan to intervene on his behalf with his own cabinet colleagues⁴⁹.

Most ministers, even those generally credited with some stature, like Jean Lesage of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, stuck to their own responsibilities. Lesage was a notable recruit to St. Laurent's cabinet, clearly a 'comer' (who later became premier of Québec), but there were too few of his sort. There was under St. Laurent a serious lag in the recruitment and renewal of ministerial personnel: it was perhaps a fatal flaw.

IV THE PRIME MINISTER

Of course the most important minister of all was St. Laurent himself. As a P.C.O. official reflected in 1952, it is "difficult to overestimate [the] power and influence a Prime Minister can wield if he desires", so that an "understanding of his unique position is necessary to [an] appreciation of [the] atmosphere and working of Cabinet"¹. Even a summary of ministerial personnel indicates that St. Laurent permitted and in fact encouraged a degree of ministerial strength and even independence which King would never have tolerated and which King actually warned against². St. Laurent was personally of the 'primus inter pares' school.

But in fact he was much more than that in practice, though he didn't - and didn't try to - publicly dominate his cabinet as some prime ministers have done. The force of his position was built upon subtler bases than the constitutional prerogatives of prime ministerial power, and his practices were well adapted to the overall structure and characteristics of the government. The effective operation of his cabinet structure, and the ministerial relations which pervaded it, depended on St. Laurent personally. The first of the periods of depression which later returned increasingly frequently was noticed by Pickersgill as early as 1949³, but it was only after 1954 that they became bad

enough that he periodically - and several times at crucial moments - "ceased to lead"⁴. Even then it was his absence that dominated proceedings - nobody else could fill the vacuum. But it must not be forgotten that this decline was only periodic; it disrupted his cabinet's operating structure but it should not be allowed to obscure the structure's essential elements.

The Prime Minister as Flexible Rationalist

Certainly St. Laurent maintained the various usual bases and means of prime ministerial power, though very much in his own personal, gentlemanly, and highly reasonable way. He was the dominant man, no doubt of that, but he was not the traditional intuitive political chief that King had been⁵.

Yet he had been King's privately chosen successor. Since being unwillingly drafted into the wartime cabinet in 1941 as Minister of Justice and chief Québec minister, he had been a senior figure. His appointment in 1946 as the first separate Secretary of State for External Affairs marked him heir apparent⁶. But he was not a career politician - he was recruited by King directly into the cabinet to replace King's late close comrade Ernest Lapointe. His qualifications were character, ability and personal stature, not political experience. He had been a prominent corporation and constitutional lawyer, and this

background played an important part in his attitudes to government. He shared and fostered the government's characteristics of conservatism, a managerial perspective, a preference for business-like flexibility, and a reliance upon individuals to do their jobs. "Basically a pragmatist in his approach to public affairs, he paid little attention to ideological factors" said his biographer⁷, who suggested St. Laurent was "in some respects, strikingly similar" to Eisenhower: both, for example, "had entered politics late in life, reluctantly and from a sense of duty" and both "ran their cabinets more as committee chairmen than as hard-driving executives aware of the details of their respective administrations"⁸. He was, reflected one who worked with him, not a grand innovator but had great ingenuity as a problem-solver and possessed a remarkable capacity to recognize and grasp others' ideas⁹. His views were summed up by his repeated emphasis that "actions speak louder than words"¹⁰.

Thus St. Laurent's strength depended first upon his own personal abilities and upon their recognition by his ministers. King thought St. Laurent the ablest man who ever sat in a Canadian cabinet¹¹. Ministers deferred to him, and sought his advice and good offices, because of his intelligence, his facility in grasping the essence of a document or argument, and his usually excellent practical judgement. "More than any Prime Minister I have known",

said Pickersgill (who was close to King and Pearson too), "St. Laurent dominated his cabinet, not by imposing his authority, but by his sheer intellect, his wide knowledge, and his unequalled persuasiveness"¹².

He possessed and exercised the usual powers of his position - the traditional litany of prerogatives - but they were secondary. It is revealing that King made sure his ministers were familiar with the 1935 minute of Council setting out the "principal duties of the Prime Minister of a formal character", but St. Laurent simply let it alone¹³. His exercise of his prerogatives was typically rational and orderly but flexible and restrained. Take for example an important factor for this study, the prime minister's control of cabinet's procedural machinery. "All such arrangements are naturally as the Prime Minister so desires"¹⁴, and St. Laurent's ministers left them to him. St. Laurent recognized the importance of organized cabinet operations, and normally accepted the P.C.O.'s recommendations to improve procedures, but he did not take the initiative in such matters. He was not an "organization man". His rationality was directed at results before structures, and at handling people not machinery. Nor did he manipulate machinery or procedures: he used his control over them as an extension of his prime ministerial responsibilities not his personal views.

Another aspect of his strength was also important to his style and to the cabinet's structure. It was the respect, trust, and affection of his ministers. Pearson thought him "the finest possible embodiment of Canadian unity"¹⁵. His ministers trusted him to be impartial between them, by and large, even though he naturally was closer to some. He supported them both publicly and privately in their responsibilities¹⁶. Their trust of him was based on his of them - it was not blind trust but, as a logical and courteous man, reflected one close to him, he felt he had selected his ministers to do their jobs and therefore he owed them his support unless they were clearly wrong¹⁷. Most liked him for this and for his accessibility for confidential discussions with them - in contrast to King's remote operations from his Laurier House den rather than his official offices. Though some ministers were a little in awe of St. Laurent, most took advantage of his ready and usually perceptive advice. He inspired terrific personal loyalty. Pearson found St. Laurent "about the kindest and most understanding man I have ever met and the most selfless", and never saw him in a state of anger before 1956. To another minister he was "a father to us all"¹⁸.

As always in politics, one important reason for their trust if not their affection, was electoral success and public political prestige. For most of his years in office St. Laurent was a winner as party leader. Yet St.

Laurent was not a deeply partisan prime minister: he seemed like Eisenhower "above the cut and thrust of day-to-day politics"¹⁹, and "took little detailed interest in party organization"²⁰. "With his sharp lawyer's mind", said Pickersgill, he "made a decision by removing the human element from it and working it out like an algebraic equation. Then he tried to make it fit political reality"²¹. In his latter years of power he seemed more and more to try to exclude politics from government administration, and this contributed to the government's defeat²². Nevertheless for most of the period he worked at his leadership chores by tying them - suitably enough in Canada where party organizations are subordinate to the leader and his image - to his role of statesmanlike leader of parliament rather than partisan chieftan. He attended the House of Commons frequently, was in practice his own House Leader for years, and until his first lapse in 1955 retained an impressive dominance of the House with his "practical and moderate attitude"²³. The loss of this dominance was disastrous for his and the government's standing. In the last analysis a prime minister's essential strength is his political strength. Though a newspaper declared "The Prime Minister loses his grip"²⁴, however, even in 1957 Liberal strategists were convinced St. Laurent was still Canada's unbeatable "Uncle Louis".

St. Laurent worked hard and systematically within the government to deserve his ministers' trust and respect. He worked particularly hard at keeping informed. He cultivated personal sources without going behind ministers' backs as King had done and Diefenbaker was to do. He read as many newspapers and documents as he could: "Mr. St. Laurent has the very commendable habit of reading all Cabinet material available to him before any meeting"²⁵ (this had not been true of King). And he read with perception. Being personally widely informed was essential to his concept of his role as prime minister.

St. Laurent's Concept of His Role: Responsibility for the Whole

St. Laurent conceived of his role in the cabinet's structure as rationally as he tried to do most things, and as suitably matched to his personality, abilities and circumstances as it could be. He believed that his first and central job was to maintain the cabinet and government in harmonious being. Externally this meant the effective performance of his role as political party leader. Internally it was more complicated, but it came down to this: it was the prime minister's individual responsibility to maintain, encourage and as far as possible embody the collective responsibility of his colleagues. St. Laurent's course to this objective - consistently and rationally

enough - depended upon upholding ministers' individual responsibilities as well as the collective. His own responsibilities he exercised as guardian, overseer, disciplinarian, and catalyst.

He felt strongly his duty as the guardian of cabinet's authority, and made sure cabinet had an opportunity to consider all matters of policy and the right to decide upon them²⁶. Nevertheless - as will be seen - the cabinet's practical exercise of that authority was oriented around the various individual responsibilities involved.

Only the prime minister, however, could watch over the whole of government operations and policies. It was up to him to see that ministers in exercising their individual responsibilities did not let down the collective either by disregarding occasions for collective decision-taking or by the quality of their behaviour and decisions. It was St. Laurent's job to oversee "this total package"²⁷, which he did by "exercising a general supervision over his colleagues' activities but seldom intervening directly in their respective fields of responsibility"²⁸. He was informed for this role as head of the cabinet's machinery and he worked to inform himself. He gave the government a sense of supervision of the whole, though apparently he took this to mean primarily ensuring the whole government worked effectively rather than making it do particular

things. "He was interested in getting the business of government done, not in the details of doing it"²⁹.

More than simply overseeing, however, he saw his job as requiring him (as one close to him put it) to discipline ministers adequately - but not to set priorities or develop policy himself³⁰. He emphasized the individual responsibility of ministers, but knew it was up to him to check them if they took it beyond the limits of cabinet's collective authority and other ministers' individual responsibilities. In general St. Laurent was a good disciplinarian - he could discipline without offending because of his personal standing - but he was perhaps inclined not to check his ministers soon enough, though able and willing to lead "a special rescue squad if disaster struck from too much individual responsibility"³¹. Occasionally inter-ministerial disputes reached the public apparently because St. Laurent had not quashed them soon enough³². It was this inclination which was exaggerated in St. Laurent's decline and constituted the danger warned against by King³³.

But all of these aspects of St. Laurent's concept of his role - as guardian, as overseer, and as disciplinarian - came together in the most positive sense of his individual responsibility for the collective: he was its catalyst. This was described by R.B. Bryce as cabinet secretary: "despite [his] control over Cabinet he cannot

dictate to it in fact - [he] has to keep it as [an] effective collective body...therefore [he] has [a] special duty to find solutions on which agreement [is] possible"³⁴.

There were two sides to this, and balancing them is one of any prime minister's most difficult continuing feats. First is the very difficult part of the conciliator: "one of [the] great talents required of a Prime Minister", reflected an official at the time, "is [the] capacity to see [the] possibilities of compromise and agreement in any situation"³⁵. This also involved encouraging a more general trust among his ministers: he "gave high priority to maintaining a harmonious team"³⁶. Second is the more active seeking out and even formulation of solutions to cabinet's difficulties. St. Laurent could be very good at this, though he was not a great innovator. Indeed participants agree one of his faults was the occasional enthusiastic imposition of one idea upon cabinet before ministers had fully thrashed other ideas about³⁷. But more usually he emphasized and respected the individual responsibilities of ministers in working towards effective collective decisions. Rather than intervene with ministers he tended to "let things filter up" before bringing his own role into play³⁸. Certainly St. Laurent did not feel he should try to impose his or anyone's set of priorities on the cabinet (this has in retrospect brought his government into some disrepute with recent ministers³⁹). But this, he evidently

believed, was the best way to a reasonable melding of collective decision-taking and individual responsibilities, including his own.

Consequences

"He is the boss", as R.B. Bryce observed in general terms, "but only as the leader, not as the sole possessor of authority"⁴⁰. That qualification is true of all prime ministers, but St. Laurent took it more to heart than some (and more than some observers). The striking thing about the St. Laurent government, recalled one participant, was how loosely he ran it - yet also, for most of the period, how much on top of it and how close to his ministers he was⁴¹. Circumstances encouraged this - the size, complexity and pace of government permitted the characteristics and style that prevailed; the personnel in his cabinet suited and fostered St. Laurent's conception of his role. His own beliefs, personality and abilities coincided in their tendencies. In principle, he believed in maintaining clear and undiffused responsibilities. Personally, he felt he owed his ministers his support in their different fields of responsibility. Practically, he felt his ministers were the cabinet's experts who had devoted themselves to understanding their policy and administrative areas: they were his and the cabinet's chief advisors, and consequently he left them "quite a bit of autonomy in their own departments"⁴².

It is clear that at least St. Laurent's immediate predecessors had brooked less ministerial strength than he, though King - especially in his later years - had allowed his ministers "a fair bit of initiative"⁴³. But participants agree that St. Laurent took it further⁴⁴. Upon being consulted he quite frequently advised ministers to act upon their own responsibility rather than taking too much to their colleagues. He retained his prime ministerial authority (he was certainly never challenged within his cabinet, either tacitly or directly), but he "was reluctant to use his prime ministerial veto unless positively convinced a proposal was pernicious"⁴⁵. He allowed his ministers quite freely to campaign amongst themselves against his less strongly held opinions.

St. Laurent could not have operated his cabinet this way if he had been a weak prime minister. Pickersgill watched "how easily he assumed authority and how naturally and willingly everyone associated with him accepted his authority": Pickersgill is biased, of course, but others agree⁴⁶. It was a matter of preference not weakness. It was not a matter of being lax but of being strict in respect of each minister's responsibilities and strict with himself. St. Laurent was able and respected; he had his own ideas and expressed them, sometimes too decisively; but he preferred to persuade his ministers rather than coerce them. He exercised his strength when he really wanted

something, but he refrained from doing it too often. As was said at the time, "except in unusual cases Cabinet will not decide contrary to [the] wishes of a Prime Minister if [the] Prime Minister insists in his opposition"⁴⁷: the qualification is nearly as important as the generalization.

St. Laurent contributed to many policy areas as prime minister, but he concentrated his forces on areas where he felt a special responsibility or expertise - "matters", as an official put it, "where he feels strongly on major issues on which he has himself taken main responsibility for finding a solution"⁴⁸. These were mainly areas where he was responsible, not where he was infringing on another minister's responsibilities. He was very much involved with external affairs, like most prime ministers exercising "his ultimate responsibility for the broad conduct of our external relations"⁴⁹, but he was careful to work closely with Pearson and without undermining Pearson's authority⁵⁰. He was especially concerned with the area of federal-provincial relations, an "always important and frequently troublesome"⁵¹ prime ministerial responsibility, but here too he normally worked closely with the variously concerned ministers, while retaining authority and initiative himself. It was his responsibility, as they had theirs.

Individual responsibilities were the key, to ministerial action, to prime ministerial action, and to understanding the interrelationships in this cabinet. But

St. Laurent's concept of his role and responsibilities, and the manner in which he fulfilled them, remained the focus even though other ministers were also strong characters. Different aspects of St. Laurent's role emerge through the cabinet structure: in the informal structure of ministerial relations, for example, an experienced participant observed that prime minister-ministerial relationships reached the peak of their importance in this government⁵². But St. Laurent's peculiar combination of strength and tolerance, of ability and restraint, was rare; accordingly the St. Laurent cabinet structure was in delicate balance, with St. Laurent as the fulcrum. It depended so very much on people: this strength became a weakness when the people the structure depended upon were no longer capable of maintaining it. Partly this was because of St. Laurent's failure to recruit and promote enough first class new men; largely it was because St. Laurent himself could no longer fill his own shoes. Nor could anyone else. While the balance lasted, however, despite shortcomings of policy or vision, within his cabinet structure "St. Laurent to his ministers was a superb boss"⁵³ - praise which he surely would have greatly appreciated.

V THE CABINET

Characteristics

The organization and behaviour of the cabinet itself were consonant with the character of the government, its prime minister and overall cabinet structure. The cabinet meeting under St. Laurent was the organizational core around which the rest of cabinet structure was arranged and oriented, and is therefore particularly indicative of that whole¹. The cabinet was the cardinal locus of collective decision-taking not only because it actually took the final decisions but because in doing so it operated as the central forum for coordination of government decisions. Obviously there are both political and administrative aspects, as well as constitutional ones, to this role of cabinet's, but the essence of the cabinet's intentions was quite straightforward: it was as efficiently as possible to reach decisions all would support, but not necessarily to construct policy to which all ministers had contributed or even with which all were in full accord. The details of the cabinet's procedures, the sorts of issues it dealt with, and its practices were aimed at that result.

Three aspects of these intentions emerge from every cabinet's operations, though their implementation varies. First is means. The primary emphasis in the St. Laurent cabinet was on informality, flexibility and

adaptability, but there was an injection of orderliness without - it was hoped - losing the virtues of flexibility. There were no abrupt new organizational departures, but there were developments, largely by attrition and piecemeal action on particular problems.

Second is the balance between individual and collective emphases. There was within St. Laurent's cabinet meetings a striking orientation around the individual portfolio responsibilities and authority of ministers. But St. Laurent and his ministers knew cabinet above all manifested collective decision-taking. There was no question that cabinet took the final decisions. The cabinet was the place where ministers not directly affected by a proposal could put their oar in, where in the last resort disagreements had to be settled, where questions of priorities were resolved (though they arose individually rather than comprehensively), where was located the "control at the top" ministers considered effective and sufficient². While taking collective decision-taking seriously the government emphasized the positions of the responsible ministers.

In so doing, ministers knew that government is finally the business of politicians not executives. The cabinet was the authoritative epitome of collective decision-taking "constitutionally, and politically" as one minister recalled³. It was part of the balance of principles that the cabinet should be the institutional

focus of the government's political nature. Ministers felt it was important, for example, that in cabinet they could let their political hair down without civil servants peering over their shoulders⁴.

But only in cabinet's practices can the meanings of these characterizations be elaborated. This chapter examines in turn the cabinet's procedural framework, issues discussed in cabinet, and the conduct of cabinet meetings including St. Laurent's chairmanship of them.

Cabinet's Procedural Framework

Cabinet's procedural framework reflects these balances of means and principles. Most of the procedures as written tended to promote cabinet's ability to take collective decisions in an orderly way, but their practice also reflected the importance of individual responsibilities. The basic organization for cabinet meetings was set out in a document entitled "Meetings of Ministers During Parliamentary Session; Procedure"⁵. This was generally re-circulated before each session and periodically revised, but the differences between 1949 and 1957 were of detail not of principle or focus. The document covered procedures for all cabinet meetings (not just during the session), including attendance, agenda, documentation, conclusions, and security. It depended for its implementation upon the P.C.O., which put most of its effort into this area, but the

P.C.O. in turn was dependent upon ministers' acceptance of the procedures. They were asked to "appreciate...in the interests of orderly conduct of Cabinet business and economy in the time of Ministers, the importance of following as far as possible the procedures set out"⁶; but in a discouraged mood one P.C.O. official told the prime minister that "Repeated circulation of this document...does not have very profound impact"⁷. There was an impact, but it was gradual.

- Agenda

Take, first, the matter of an agenda for the cabinet's meetings. The utility of an agenda in promoting effective, fair discussions and decisions was well known from wartime experience, and the procedures for its make-up were quite well established by 1949⁸. It was prepared and circulated (with supporting documents from ministers) by the Secretary to the Cabinet, after approval by the prime minister, the day before a cabinet meeting. Notification of items, with documentation, was supposed to reach the P.C.O. from "the Ministers responsible for the various items" by Monday evening for a Thursday meeting⁹. It was emphasized that "except for matters of special urgency and importance introduced by the Prime Minister or with his concurrence, items of business will be confined to those on the agenda"¹⁰. However, it seems these provisions were often seen by ministers as a paper tiger. Indeed, by 1957 the procedures had been softened to take account of practice

rather than strengthened to change it. Only 24 hour notice of items was expected, and the emphasis had become more hortatory than insistent in form: "Ministers finding it necessary to bring up items not on the agenda are requested to notify the Secretary as soon as possible so that he may inform the Prime Minister and perhaps other Ministers likely to be particularly interested"¹¹.

It was a constant struggle for the P.C.O. Naturally some issues were of real unexpected urgency. Irregularity of meetings was not conducive to orderly notice. Some Ministers used the agenda to insert items which were merely excuses to raise related issues without notice at an "opportune" time¹². And the emphasis on flexibility meant that ministers were loath to restrict the range or immediacy of their discussions. Some, such as Abbott, were by position or inclination more irritated by the late or incomplete circulation of the agenda. All knew the difficulties caused by lax practices for cabinet and for each of them, especially in respect of items "brought up by colleagues which might affect other departments in some way"¹³ - but evidently it was a temptation to feel the rules were all very well but surely "my" items were exceptional. St. Laurent himself was not inclined to be rigid, though he sympathized with the P.C.O. and occasionally wrote ministers on the subject. It seems progress was made over the years, but still in 1957 the P.C.O. experienced "some difficulty in

getting advance notice of all items to be raised and in getting papers upon them"¹⁴. The scope given individual responsibility exercised flexibly thus meant, as one involved recalled, that ministers usually did not know much in advance what their colleagues were bringing forward¹⁵.

- Documentation

The procedures and problems of the circulation of documentation were similar to those of the agenda, but the form of documents was especially revealing of the emphasis on individual responsibility. Ministers were asked for "brief, clear and logical expositions"¹⁶, but it was essentially up to a minister and his department to produce a document as they wished - some were formal, some chatty, some concise, many not. Of course it is true for all cabinets, whatever their procedure, that a really good memorandum, focusing briefly and sharply on the key issues, is rare.

The "Memorandum to Cabinet" reflected individual ministerial responsibilities. Whatever their background, documents were normally submitted by the one primarily responsible minister¹⁷. Moreover, very seldom was any document put up in opposition to the responsible minister's proposal - he put his recommendation, not so much the alternatives, and arguments were expected to emerge in discussion¹⁸. Ministers were supposed to consult with affected colleagues, and documents not infrequently

reflected such consultations (sometimes indicated by signed "concurrence"). By the time documents reached the cabinet, the policy was usually fairly well worked out: this must have been a bit hard on ministers who were interested but not consulted, but they had an opportunity to contribute since cabinet was expected at least to touch upon the arguments. Also, participants recall that in those years ministers could still read all the documents before cabinet (though not all did)¹⁹. In fact the number of documents declined from a 1952 high of about 380 to fewer than 260 in 1955 and 1956²⁰.

- Conclusions

Cabinet conclusions (today called minutes) were the responsibility of the Secretary to the Cabinet and his immediate subordinates. They were approved but not manipulated by St. Laurent, and ministerial objections were rare²¹. Conclusions were limited to what was essential to the decision plus the decision itself. This meant that after some variations they gradually assumed the fairly short form (based on British practice²²) of an attributed preamble (usually taken from the ministerial submission) describing the issue and the proposal; followed by a brief and normally unattributed summary of the main points discussed; followed by a concise statement of the decision put in a "self-contained" way so that the decision "can go out by itself and provide sufficient information to carry

out the necessary action without reference to the Conclusions as a whole"²³. The method of communicating cabinet decisions to departments and ministers varied, the problem being to reconcile their different needs and rights. The method settled on was to send full conclusions to all ministers along with "Records of Decision" ("simple individual notes for each decision requiring action"²⁴, normally comprising the "self-contained" decision, which "can be put on departmental files"²⁵) which the minister could pass on to his officials as he chose.

- Meetings

All of these procedures were complicated by a fundamental problem of flexibility: cabinet meetings were irregular in form and in frequency. An important contribution of the St. Laurent government was to reduce this irregularity. It had not always been clear, even, which meetings of ministers were real cabinets: in 1950 a P.C.O. official had to ask "what was the status of the meeting of certain ministers on Saturday...?"²⁶ Not all cabinet meetings resulted in conclusions being circulated²⁷; many apparently never had an agenda at all²⁸.

It is simply assumed today that cabinet meetings should be regularly scheduled, so that cabinet can perform its own functions effectively and ministerial time may be employed efficiently elsewhere including at committee meetings. Yet it took nearly the whole of St. Laurent's

over eight years in office to firmly establish that (normally) there would be one major cabinet, with an agenda, held each Thursday. From the outset St. Laurent himself was "quite disposed to limit major cabinet meetings to once a week"²⁹ but other briefer meetings were held daily during sessions "to deal with Parliamentary business and questions of urgency"³⁰. This practice confused matters, and exacerbated agenda and documentation problems³¹. Gradually, however, meetings were restricted in number, importance and subject matter, accompanied by the effort to fix upon one regular cabinet day. This culminated in a firm ministerial expression of "their preference for meetings during the session on Thursday...for simplicity"³², and also to meet what one P.C.O. official uncharitably described as "the apparent inertia of departments at the end and beginning of a week"³³.

These developments and the evolving character of the government, are shown by the frequency of cabinet meetings³⁴: the total number dropped from a 1951 high of over 130, into the eighties, with an estimated 1955 low of 71. Cabinet structure was settling into a more orderly form, but it could not be called rigid by any stretch of the imagination.

Issues Discussed in Cabinet

Even less could that be said of the criteria for considering an issue in cabinet: perhaps inevitably the factors were much less tangible and the results less classifiable. "Cabinet decided all kinds of things"³⁵, and most important issues came to cabinet eventually, in some form. It is a question of which kinds of issues were taken especially seriously or were most often taken up in discussions; and a question of probabilities - the cabinet could and did pick out any issue for deep discussion, and skip over others.

The procedures document stated that cabinet meetings were supposed to deal "only with matters involving major questions of government policy"³⁶, or with "new policy issues"³⁷. Issues of this sort included recurring items such as the budget, estimates, the legislative programme, the speech from the throne. Other areas frequently involved "major questions", such as external and defence affairs (with "a marked increase in Cabinet attention"³⁸ under St. Laurent), and federal-provincial relations. Yet cabinet also devoted much time to appointments and to draft bills and administrative regulations of "massive detail"³⁹. On what further grounds did they deserve cabinet attention?

An obvious criterion was political impact, but the meaning of this was variable too. As regional representatives, ministers watched out for their areas: some questions

unimportant in themselves were raised in cabinet because of their impact in affected regions (though details of local contracts and patronage, as well as more general consultations, were usually resolved - if at all - amongst the responsible ministers on their own)⁴⁰. Parliamentary matters occupied a substantial proportion of cabinet time during the session, involving a range from draft replies to Commons questions to the usual avalanche of legislative proposals as the session began.

Cabinet issues were also defined in terms of individual responsibilities, according to whether more than a few ministers' responsibilities were involved, and which ministers' responsibilities they were. But inevitably this criterion was particularly variable: such questions were often settled amongst ministers on their own or with the prime minister, or could involve committees.

A final criterion, vague but influential in practice, was the degree of "general interest"⁴¹ in an issue whatever its actual importance.

The issues which came to the cabinet, then, could be either broad or detailed. The criteria were not simple and encompassed both ends of the spectrum. Over three meetings in 1952 the cabinet considered, amongst other things, the date for a Thanksgiving holiday, External Affairs appointments, a British proposal for a Commonwealth economic conference, storm damage to east coast fisheries,

pork supply in Canada, and sewer projects for Ottawa⁴². Moreover, the amount of cabinet time spent on an issue would not necessarily correspond to a retrospective judgement of its importance. A great deal depended on the ministers, not least on St. Laurent as the cabinet's chairman; it is finally through its actual conduct that the cabinet's structure is considered.

The Conduct of Cabinet Meetings

In the House of Commons St. Laurent described cabinet meetings accurately but innocuously in terms of the cabinet's role as an informal committee of the Privy Council:

"The tradition that has been built up is that everybody is invited, a free discussion takes place, and then it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to advise the Crown. After that free discussion has taken place, after there has been an opportunity for every member of council to know what kind of advice is going to be given and an opportunity to take the constitutional course open to him, if he does not agree, of resigning from the government, the Crown is then advised"⁴³.

The reality was less simple, of course. The cabinet's operation was primarily informal and flexible, despite definite elements of order, and its nature essentially political rather than constitutional. The cabinet embodied collective decision-taking yet its operations were founded on individual responsibilities.

- Collective Decision-Taking and Individual Responsibilities

Simply in order to govern the country and to remain politically successful, ministers had to agree in cabinet, or be brought to agree. Cabinet meetings were by no means the only places where the necessary compromises were made, but when it seemed a "better" compromise could be made there the issue was taken to cabinet by somebody⁴⁴. Since cabinet decisions are virtually never reached by voting, agreements had to be achieved by a process of discussion, reconciliation, and adjustment, taking into account varying ministerial influence, position, personality and strength of views. Some had to yield and that was not always easy⁴⁵.

The process of reaching agreement from diversity, however, was moulded by certain simplifying conventions reflecting individual responsibility. The feeling, as one minister described it, was that a minister came to cabinet and had to justify his policy⁴⁶; the cabinet seldom tried to formulate policy, recognizing difficulties enough in efficiently deciding on it. The responsible minister supplied the document for discussion, introduced it and generally opened the discussion⁴⁷. Ministers most often contributed to the debate from the viewpoints of their particular responsibilities, although there were some who might take more general positions such as the Minister of

Finance (whose own responsibilities were nearly comprehensive) or Pickersgill (whose curiosity was extensive). Indeed, at least some ministers hesitated to interfere "on policy grounds alone", as one of them said⁴⁸. And it was a "firm convention" that the responsible minister "would be given the benefit of any doubt, if he expressed his view at all firmly"⁴⁹. This did not mean he had an easy time of it: the discussion was important, and experienced ministers could be a hard audience. Their own responsibilities were carefully nursed, and included cross-cutting political responsibilities. All ministers knew they stood or fell together, and St. Laurent as the minister individually responsible for the collective could be formidable. But still individual responsibilities were the foundation.

- St. Laurent as Chairman

The cabinet's conduct depended fundamentally on St. Laurent as its chairman and leader. He recognized and encouraged the balance of the individual and the collective through a blend of flexibility and orderliness.

St. Laurent acted upon the perception that the essence of the situation was a necessity for compromise, a necessity that depended upon him. One cabinet secretary thought it was "often remarkable" how the cabinet did manage to reach agreement, and how quickly it did so, but it "comes with practice, effort and necessity and depends ultimately of course on the Prime Minister".⁵⁰ St. Laurent recognized

that "one of the great talents required of a Prime Minister is to see the possibilities of compromise and agreement in any situation"⁵¹. He also knew this was not a passive role. He knew the need "to intervene at some stage in the discussion to steer it toward a conclusion about which he feels very strongly himself, or which he feels will reconcile the views of his colleagues"⁵². But apparently he felt that it would be better if decisions were achieved without his detailed intervention if possible, though there might be quite a few exceptions. To this end he tried usually to influence the shape more than the specific results of discussions.

St. Laurent proceeded by a flexible and tactful treatment of his colleagues. He fostered an equable and relaxed atmosphere in many ways, for example permitting smoking as King had not. Although some ministers were restrained by a fear of appearing ineffective, he was "always attentive and rarely impatient"⁵³, "a very considerate and courteous chairman, and anxious to encourage the widest participation in discussions"⁵⁴. He clearly felt it was desirable to "provide an opportunity at some point in the meeting for Ministers to raise matters that are not on the agenda nor supported by papers"⁵⁵, and indeed encouraged this by a tendency to "ask round the table" at the end of a meeting "if anybody has anything further to raise"⁵⁶. St. Laurent disapproved of the abuse of this practice for

tactical purposes, and discouraged it⁵⁷, but the suspicion lingers that he too often allowed such matters to proceed unchecked especially if he, at least, had been informed. His flexibility and tact were useful in reaching compromises: "often it is difficult to be sure exactly what the decision of cabinet is because...there are frequently differences of opinion between Ministers which have to be resolved at the cost of one person or group giving way, and it is frequently desirable that this should take place without any unnecessary loss of face"⁵⁸. He encouraged ministers to settle differences on their own before cabinet, perhaps with his assistance, or in the time granted by a tactful "referral"⁵⁹ to allow face-saving revision.

As a P.C.O. official described the process, "It is quite often the case that a matter is discussed at three or four Cabinet meetings before a decision is reached. Often new arguments come up at various stages, new material is presented or other developments occur. The final decision depends on the accumulated consideration"⁶⁰. In most cases the decision emerged fairly clearly⁶¹, but it was always up to the prime minister to draw it out and pass it on (via the P.C.O.). That too could be a test of tact and ingenuity.

Behind St. Laurent's flexibility, however, were his strong business-like inclinations. His "operation of Cabinet", recalled Pearson, "was very business-like" and "more formal than mine" (though some would say that was not

hard!))⁶². St. Laurent wanted decisions not discussions for their own sake. He worked for "very civilized"⁶³ meetings because he thought they would be more productive. He treated his ministers flexibly and tactfully because he thought he could get decisions more easily that way. His flexibility in cabinet was limited by this purpose, just as his support for a good agenda was solid even though modified by exceptions. He kept ever closer to the agenda over the years, as far as he could. He frowned on inconsequential or verbose interjections. He hated wasting time in unnecessary conflict: instead of thrashing over details he pushed his ministers to settle them on their own; and neither he nor equally business-like ministers fought for already lost causes - it was partly because of his stubbornness that Gardiner became an isolated figure. St. Laurent's support of his responsible ministers was based on this simplifying, business-like logic as well as on his personal reasonableness and dignified courtesy. Flexibility and informality alone would never have achieved the calm and rational discussions St. Laurent sought, nor would it have permitted the shorter, crisper and more disciplined discussions he achieved. Cabinet meetings under St. Laurent were much more liable than they had been under King to last only the scheduled three hours, and decisions were reached more quickly and easily⁶⁴.

Behind both his flexibility and his orderliness, however, were his strengths. As chairman he preferred not to direct ministers, but his influence on the speed and content of decisions was enhanced by his ability as "master of the brief"⁶⁵. By work, experience and ability he often (Pickersgill says always) had as good or better a grasp of the subject than did the responsible minister⁶⁶. He did not back his ministers blindly. He took seriously his own responsibility for achieving the best final decisions and so for contributing to the discussions. Pearson's brief summary of cabinet meetings under St. Laurent is perhaps more curt than most but not untypical: "the Prime Minister would listen to the discussion, summarize it, give his own view, and announce or reserve a decision"⁶⁷. He had his own opinions on issues, though he seemingly did not go out of his way to have an opinion on every issue and he shared the pragmatic and unideological inclinations of his colleagues.

He was, in fact, on the horns of a minor dilemma: On the one hand he preferred the tactful, courteous approach based on allowing full play to individual responsibilities, although this left the possibility that - as even C.D. Howe once said - "King was tough, you sort of wanted that at times from St. Laurent. He didn't wield a big stick like King"⁶⁸. On the other hand, St. Laurent was able and involved, might have met some ministers individually on an issue before cabinet, and sometimes succumbed to the

temptation to "shoot off his mouth", giving a masterful summary of pros and cons followed by his view -- naturally this depressed the discussion to say the least⁶⁹. His usual practice was the former, but his "besetting vice" as chairman was the latter. With his decline, however, he could not sustain either position and apparently lapsed more often into a slough of inactivity. It was only then that his cabinet meetings seem to have really suffered from his conduct of them.

Nevertheless, as long as he was fully capable - and even, by habit, in the intervals when he was not - the conduct of his cabinets expressed the balances of means and principles which he encouraged. Through it all, and through the inevitable manoeuvring and bickering from which no cabinet however "civilized" is free, he maintained the view, as one influenced by him put it, that "The essential problem...is to get decisions that all will be prepared to support"⁷⁰.

VI CABINET COMMITTEES

Cabinet committees were useful in helping to get decisions all could support. Committees, for example, allowed affected responsible ministers to reach at least broad agreement before the cabinet met. The range of disagreement or alternatives for cabinet consideration could be narrowed by preliminary committee discussion, often with direct official advice. Occasionally a committee might take a problem nearly entirely off the cabinet's hands. Cabinet committees aided cabinet discussions and decisions essentially by saving cabinet time. Although certain exceptions stand out, committees in general were not seen as especially distinctive or important elements in the government's functioning, or as positive or continuing coordinative forces; they were subordinate devices to be employed in an ad hoc fashion as circumstances warranted. It is revealing that none of the chief memoirs of the St. Laurent years contains many or significant references to cabinet committees. Their influence on most important government decisions was modest - they were not as important a method of saving cabinet time as the structure of informal relations - but they were a success in their own terms, and made contributions to the subsequent development of committees in cabinet structure. In any study of cabinet structure they are a central element.

Development

Before examining the cabinet committee system as a whole, however, it must be noted that it was not static. In a characteristically ad hoc way, existing committees changed quite frequently; but there was also a more general course of development. St. Laurent inherited some twenty committees¹, a few established and useful but the vast majority ad hoc in nature (that is, impermanent and arranged for some special purpose) and haphazard in use; many were completely inactive. The committee structure was at the disposal of the prime minister, but there were no great reforms or organizational strategies. Nevertheless the broad trend was in line with St. Laurent's style - as occasion arose the committee structure was quietly consolidated (apparently with the help of a P.C.O. headed by a new Secretary taking the opportunity to tidy things up). In March 1949 three outdated committees were combined in a new Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy (which soon disappeared itself, however)². In the process, the old device of formal Privy Council Committees was effectively abandoned in favour of committees of cabinet. But consolidation was soon accompanied by a new period of creation of cabinet committees, in line with the government's ad hoc viewpoint and reflecting its busiest years. In 1950 some baker's dozen committees seem to have been in some sort of existence, only one of which was new, in 1951 and 1952

around 16 with about a third new each year. A Cabinet Committee on Legislation was created in 1952; it became a standard element in committee structures. Committee activity declined in the 1953 election year, with around a dozen supposed to exist including three new committees. Afterward, the committee structure reflected the government's own development - fewer committees, around 11 in 1954 and 13 in 1955 with five new committees each year, but no new committees after that and only a few abolished. Committee activity was never great, with between one-quarter and one-third of committees apparently not meeting each year; activity also declined in the last couple of years.

Keeping these developments in mind, however, one can discuss cabinet committees under St. Laurent as a whole. Their numbers did not vary markedly ; at most times there seem to have been between ten and fifteen committees, though many of these would not be active (the notion of activity will be discussed later). More important, their characteristics remained much the same throughout.

What was a Cabinet Committee

One problem is the uncertainty of what was a cabinet committee, and what committees there were. These figures for the numbers and activity of committees are not definite; most are informed guesses based on scattered references. The difference between the occasional informal

ministerial meeting and a cabinet committee meeting was not always clear even to the P.C.O. at first. The distinctions among words used to describe committees were blurred: as one P.C.O. official wrote, "some standing become moribund and die; some ad hoc become permanent"³. Committee lists were not complete, and have not survived intact; often when committees concluded their existence, and sometimes when they began, is not clear.

However, one of the St. Laurent contributions was the development of more generally shared distinctive features of cabinet committees. These features were largely procedural matters of forms and practices (which will be elaborated on), such as describing only real committees as committees; establishing them by formal cabinet or prime ministerial decision; identifying committee reports to cabinet as reports; and encompassing all committees within the P.C.O. network of secretarial services and coordination supplying them with written agenda and conclusions. The Treasury Board had its own sizeable secretariat, but liaison with the P.C.O. was close. These features were not new; it was a matter of making them shared among cabinet committees but not informal meetings. Ministers certainly came to see definite distinctions between ministerial meetings and cabinet committees⁴.

Moreover, despite the essentially ad hoc nature of St. Laurent cabinet committees it is clear that they were

not all restricted to purely special and ad hoc roles. Ministers realized that committees could serve longer-term, more continuing purposes. Some committees served obviously permanent purposes - the Treasury Board and Cabinet Defence Committee, for example - but others were of a vaguer, twilight (or dawn) condition beyond the purely special but less than the permanent. This "shape" of St. Laurent's committee structure will be discussed later, after noting some general characteristics of the committees and before describing their forms and practices.

General Characteristics of the Committees

Certain general characteristics of the St. Laurent cabinet committees help clarify the contemporary notion of cabinet committees and inform an understanding of their operation. These characteristics apply most obviously to the common shorter-term committees, but also to the uses made of the longer-term ones. Committees were subordinate institutions which reflected the government's structural characteristics in their own.

- 'Negative' Place and Purposes

The fundamental attitude towards cabinet committees was a negative one. "The normal committee task" was seen as one "which it is not desirable or possible for various reasons to have performed by an individual or existing organization".⁵ For a subject to go to a cabinet

committee there had to be a reason why it shouldn't go elsewhere; today, with committees a fundamental and positive part of cabinet structure, there must be a strong reason for a subject not to go to a committee. Under St. Laurent there was to be no organization between the two traditional poles of cabinet structure, that is cabinet meeting to embody collective decision-taking and ministers individually responsible for their portfolios. On the one hand, a veteran minister recalled, a committee was not supposed to take decisions in one minister's area⁶. Even the Privy Council Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research, charged with "a specific responsibility for supervision and coordination of government research", was weakened by the fear of bringing it "into conflict with the responsibilities of individual ministers"⁷ (in fact this committee met fewer than half a dozen times under St. Laurent⁸). On the other hand, ministers believed that it was "the collective wisdom of the whole" which should deal with any problem "not some one's responsibility alone"⁹. Committee matters were ones where most ministers did not feel they need be involved, on policy or political grounds. Cabinet committees could only help cabinet, they could not as a rule do important things themselves; one official's highest praise of the Legislation Committee was that it "greatly facilitated the work of the Cabinet"¹⁰.

It was an essential rule that committees were only advisory to cabinet: "the purpose of a Cabinet Committee is simply to provide a forum for discussion of certain matters within its terms of reference and then to report to the Cabinet where the actual decisions are taken"¹¹. This was no mere formality. Participants recall that issues usually were reopened and reargued in cabinet, though at less length (and sometimes at hardly any length at all) than would otherwise have been the case¹². It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that the issues considered by committees were seldom really important ones (such as the Trans-Canada Pipeline), and that their reports were often discursive and even indecisive in tone. There was a feeling among ministers, as one of them said, that the most a cabinet committee could do was to "boil things down a bit"¹³.

But very far from everything was so boiled. Even continuing committees, recalled an experienced official, were not a regular step in the process of policy-making¹⁴. With a few exceptions it was not expected that matters in a particular policy sector would go to a cabinet committee before cabinet, nor was this usually done even when a relevant committee existed. If such a committee existed and could meet when required it might be used; but unless it was very well-established or new and in the forefront of ministers' minds, matters usually went to cabinet instead

and only then, if at all, to a committee. The Committee on Economic Policy had broad terms of reference but no specific authority or position: it succumbed within a year to this negative view of the place and purposes of cabinet committees.

There were exceptions. A few committees were permanent, relatively active and even regular stages in their policy areas. The Treasury Board in particular made significant and authoritative decisions on its own, though its work was often seen by ministers as pretty routine¹⁵. Even the Board was supposed to ensure all important matters went to cabinet. The Defence Committee was less active but dealt conclusively with quite a few issues. The P.C.O. tried to ensure it really remained advisory, but its decisions were not infrequently rubber-stamped by cabinet (and were expected to be)¹⁶. But these committees were exceptional.

- 'Ad Hocery' in Establishment, Uses and Operations

Exceptions themselves point up the second general characteristic: cabinet committees were consistent in their inconsistency, so to speak. There was a strong belief in the virtue (and even the inevitability) of an ad hoc flexibility and informality. One Secretary to the Cabinet was forthright: "If it produces an affirmative answer, I don't suppose it matters whether the satisfactory result is

produced by 'principles of effective committee procedure' or not"17.

Ad hocery was considered to be in the nature of committees - what else could a cabinet committee be? There were no uniform criteria for their use. Different committees had different uses (as will be seen). A committee's original use might be different from the uses it took on as it functioned - it seems, for example, that a continuing Committee on Federal-Provincial Relations may have begun to emerge by 1957 from the last of a series set up to deal with particular conferences18. Committees were established, sometimes explicitly, "to be called upon from time to time as required"19. The exceptions did not disprove the rule: they were ad hoc exceptions to ad hocery.

The criteria for the assignment of issues for committee consideration were equally various. Indeed flexibility encouraged rather more use of cabinet committees than might have been expected from the generally "negative" attitude toward them: their flexibility made them useful. Committees were used, recalled one official, when there was "an issue of sufficient importance at a particular time to call for a committee"20 - but the meaning of this statement lies in its adjectives - "sufficient", "particular" - as much as its nouns. Committees, as this implies, normally dealt with problems, not broader areas of policy or more general coordinating functions. They had specific purposes

even when they played more or less continuing roles. As was written in 1949, "a large part of the work of a Cabinet Committee is to assess a particular problem and recommend accordingly to Cabinet"²¹. But the problems also depended on circumstances: committees tended to be used when the cabinet (mostly meaning the prime minister) felt an issue at hand was, as one observer put it, "a particularly difficult one upon which agreement couldn't easily be reached in cabinet"²². St. Laurent had something of a penchant for ad hoc committees to "get together and save us from a lot of useless talk"²³. Committees were occasionally used to settle specific differences of opinion. They were used when a matter required a "relatively detailed or complicated or technical discussion"²⁴, often involving direct official participation. The Committee on Territorial Waters was established in 1955 "in view of the many complications of this and the probable desire of some Ministers to go into the details of the matter", and so they could "meet with the officials concerned"²⁵. And committees were used - as a necessary but not sufficient criterion - when a question "particularly interested a certain small number of ministers"²⁶ without concerning the whole cabinet. It was usually in this sense only that most committees could be called coordinating, not in the more authoritative sense often implied today. This criterion, as so much else,

reflected the strength of individual ministerial responsibility.

Even if these various criteria were met, there was not automatic use of a committee: often the matter would be settled amongst ministers on their own or in the cabinet itself. Criteria were not rules, just as rules were not rigid.

This characteristic ad hocery in the use of committees, and even more in their actual functioning, was modified by a gradual trend toward greater orderliness of cabinet committees under St. Laurent, and greater clarity and consistency of their definition and existence. There was, however, no general order or system in St. Laurent's use of committees.

- Modest Influence, and Exceptions

The impact of this ad hocery was also mitigated by the third general characteristic of the St. Laurent committees: their influence was generally modest. The government expected to gain the advantages of flexibility while avoiding its pitfalls by assigning relatively little authority to committees. As a rule, committees were not central to policy formulation and decision in the St. Laurent government. Important decisions were seldom made at committees, though certainly committee discussions could influence those decisions if a committee were involved at all. One minister said bluntly that the purpose of cabinet

committees was simply to "winnow chaff"²⁷. Committee reports were always advisory, but they could carry "some weight" depending upon circumstances and especially upon their subject matter and membership²⁸. It was not believed, however, that "the importance of the task is a necessary factor in the effectiveness of a committee"²⁹.

A few committees were important and effective. While it is remarkable how few participants, especially ministers, remember cabinet committees as significant, or remember particular committees, it is equally striking how nearly unanimous is their recollection of the importance of a few committees, notably the Cabinet Defence Committee and the Treasury Board³⁰. Both had continuing functions which made them influential. They and some other committees dealt with important issues.

But a key factor in any committee's influence was its membership - another ad hoc rather than systematic factor, and one consistent with this government's emphasis on individual responsibilities. As an acute participant recalled, a committee normally included all the more important and responsible ministers in its field and in that case would normally have its advice taken by cabinet after discussion³¹. This was less because the advice was from a committee and more because it had been discussed and agreed upon by the individually responsible ministers; indeed it seems it was not infrequent for a committee, after

discussion, simply to accept the advice of the responsible minister (or of an interdepartmental committee) which it had been set up to study.

However, some committees were more comprehensive, important, and fortunate in their membership than others. A useful and influential committee needed an interested chairman and influential ministers who participated actively in its deliberations. Even - or perhaps particularly - standing committees depended on their chairman and members wanting to use them. The Defence Committee included all the affected ministers (which in its case meant nearly all the top government ministers), it was chaired by the prime minister, and was actively employed by the Minister of Defence: not even all its most important decisions were referred to cabinet for approval³². The Committee on the Library of Parliament, set up in 1953, was unlikely to have its findings opposed, including as it did not only the responsible minister (Public Works) as chairman but also both Howe and St. Laurent as personally interested members³³. The Treasury Board had a great deal of authority, but did not include any major ministers other than its head, the Minister of Finance, and its detailed concerns did not greatly interest some of its own members³⁴. The Committee on Economic Policy died partly because the Minister of Finance, who had to be its chief support, did not like it³⁵. Apparently no other influential

minister particularly supported it. This emphasizes, again, the weight put upon the working out by each minister of his own individual responsibilities.

Overall Shape of the Committee Structure

There was no real system of cabinet committees; there was no conscious attempt to integrate them all, though some continuing ones had relations with each other, nor to construct a committee structure covering all or most of the subjects of government. In notes for a speech an official underlined the words "whole structure informal and flexible"³⁶. One very experienced minister, after some thought, saw "no pattern at all"³⁷ to the way cabinet committees were used.

But there was an overall shape to the structure, compounded of purpose, level or importance of committee focus and use, continuity and longevity, and frequency of meetings (though usually information cannot be exact). There were apparently between ten and fifteen committees at most times, but many of these committees would not be actually meeting. Committees of an ad hoc nature, whether ostensibly continuing or not, met according to circumstances not to a timetable. Similarly, committees of modest influence, acting for restricted, negative purposes, would not meet frequently. Committees which seem to have been retained on the books were quite often simply "dormant"³⁸ or

even ghostly remnants - inactive potentials only. Their "life cycles" will be examined later, but the meaning of "activity" should be indicated. Some committees never met at all. The Committee on Emergency Measures "became inactive after 1951³⁹", but only died with the government's defeat in 1957. In 1952 the P.C.O. classified a number of committees as "usually active" (the Special Committee of Council, and Defence - which met nine times that year); "very inactive" (Economic Policy and Broadcasting Policy - neither of which had met for well over a year); and the rest (mostly said to "meet at fairly long intervals or have periodic bursts of activity")⁴⁰. No more than four or five committees in any year met more often than a half dozen times; most met less often, and seemingly between a quarter to a third each year never met at all.

But given that framework of activity there was a cabinet committee structure. It consisted of a central core of three active, standing committees of an operational or administrative rather than policy focus; a very few broad and continuing policy committees; and a larger number - the majority - of ad hoc committees, of widely varying longevity and activity and of more or less specific focus upon particular issues. Discussion of these types will serve to present a number of committees in some detail.

- The Operational Core

The operational core consisted of the Special Committee of Council, the Treasury Board, and the Cabinet Committee on Legislation. All were standing committees thoroughly accepted by ministers, occupying pretty well defined positions, active, and with a certain authority over their own concerns. They were, in a sense, not "regular" committees (as a minister put it⁴¹). They were not occupied in discussing policy issues but had broadly coordinative responsibilities supporting in their own ways cabinet's collective decision-taking.

The Special Committee of Council⁴² met usually once a week just before cabinet "to dispose of submissions to Council of a routine character"⁴³, which included "at least ninety percent of the orders in council"⁴⁴. Its purpose was to save cabinet's time from being wasted by routine chores while also (helped by its P.C.O. staff) watching on behalf of cabinet for any more substantial or potentially controversial issue for referral to the cabinet. Its was a constitutionally necessary function that required political attention, but its routine character was demonstrated by its often reluctant membership of the least busy and influential ministers, its irregular organization (a chairman only by default until 1953⁴⁵), and its ad hoc operations (meeting "in any office designated by a particular Minister for his own convenience on a given

date"⁴⁶). It was indispensable, but was summed up by one man's recollection of "that old thing!"⁴⁷

The Treasury Board⁴⁸ was unique, very important in government operations, if not in policy-making, and a relatively unalterable part of the committee structure. Powerful before 1951, the Board's powers were augmented, clarified, and consolidated by the Financial Administration Act of that year - a major piece of legislation of the St. Laurent years and one which enjoyed general support in Parliament as "a step long overdue", as Abbott's parliamentary assistant allowed⁴⁹. The Act's "main characteristic was it carried still further the process of centralizing the executive control of finance"; as part of this process, the Treasury Board, "by being given some powers that had rested with the Governor in Council, and having a number of its customary practices made statutory, emerged as the institution within the executive with undisputed power over financial matters, subject of course to the final check of the responsible cabinet"⁵⁰. A major consequence, described by Pickersgill in 1956⁵¹, was that although "we still require the governor in council to do an enormous amount of work which in the U.K. is entrusted to individual ministers", nevertheless "many of the functions which were formerly performed by the governor in council and which imposed an intolerable burden upon - not really the whole cabinet after the beginning of the war of 1939, but upon a

large number of ministers - could be discharged by the Treasury Board". In 1951, said Pickersgill, cabinet had to process 6,874 orders in council and 10,066 Treasury Board minutes, but in 1955 only 1,847 and 2,116 respectively. It is interesting that Pickersgill felt more needed to be done, and quoted the 1912 Murray Report as still valid to this effect.

The Board's powers were defined in Chapter II; its functions were described by a senior official in 1957 as

"generally to advise or act on all matters related to finance, revenues, estimates, expenditures and financial commitments, accounts, establishments, terms and conditions of employment in the government service and general administrative policy"; and "specifically (1) through the Annual Estimates Processes, to determine the scope of each department's activities in relation to the activities of all other departments...; (2) at weekly meetings throughout the year, to consider and decide upon items having implications for future Estimates, items of a regulatory or administrative nature and changes in programmes which have been approved and provided for in current Estimates"⁵².

In practice the Treasury Board was the cabinet committee on expenditures and on administration⁵³ - a role which gave it wide authority on behalf of ministers collectively over detailed subjects of deep concern to individual ministers and departments. Its "main job each year" was preparing the government's expenditure budget by "the examination and approval of departmental Estimates"⁵⁴, but the larger policy decisions governing this process were made by cabinet, and details negotiated by the Board upon

the basis of beating down departmental proposals more than upon priorities of its own. Abbott spoke of spending "a good deal of my time sitting on that board going into the tiresome, wearisome details of individual departmental expenditures"⁵⁵. The Board was described as the "real business Committee of the Cabinet", but was looked on by most as a "necessary evil"⁵⁶.

The Board's importance was indicated by the frequency and regularity of its meetings - once a week and more often during the preparation of the Estimates in the fall. Its authority was founded on its terms of reference, clearly backed up and supported by the cabinet's own habits and conventions requiring - for example - consultation on money matters with the Board's chairman, the Minister of Finance, prior to cabinet submission⁵⁷. Its legitimacy was established by decades of tradition. It was accepted by ministers who, however grudgingly as individuals, recognized the necessity of "having to get some collective ministerial approval for their spending of their collective resources"⁵⁸. Its influence was backed by its inevitably powerful chairman, especially with Abbott in that position, and its own sizeable expert secretariat providing far more preparation and advice than the P.C.O. could or would provide for other committees⁵⁹.

But the Board was also limited by its specific duties and practices which made for a focus more upon a

compilation of detailed decisions than on their cumulative effects. As Harris said in 1955, "this is a daily grist. This goes on the year round. That is what Treasury Board officials are for ..."60. Its role meant it was regarded then and for years to come as a committee unlike the others, one somewhere "out there", as one of its sometimes frustrated officials put it, rather than in the mainstream of policy-making61. The most senior ministers avoided Treasury Board membership because of the time its activities demanded, and ministers of major spending departments were kept off it so as not to undermine its necessary role as nay-sayer to their worthy expenditures62 - a role taken so seriously it was accused of an "economy complex"63.

Abbott, as chairman, carefully preserved his authority but was not in fact much interested in the Board's detailed work. A colleague recalls Abbott was willing to compile the Estimates by making a deal with each minister over a general figure, leaving the minister and his department discretion in details64. Here is another aspect of ministerial responsibility under St. Laurent. Indeed, Abbott often left the Minister of National Revenue as de facto chairman of the Board's meetings65. Harris seems to have allowed himself to be more nearly overwhelmed by the Board's detailed business, contributing to overwork in his dual responsibilities. Inevitably, with its duties and these habits, the Board was dominated by its staff,

especially its Secretary upon whom the Board leaned heavily for briefing and to whom, as a senior official in a special position, ministers might come privately before meeting any of the Board except - perhaps - the Minister of Finance⁶⁶.

This is not to deny the Treasury Board's real importance: one big spending minister called it "the most important committee"⁶⁷. It was supposed to ensure important issues went to cabinet, and did, but it exercised its own authority firmly within its scope. It forced stubborn ministers to take their cases to the cabinet, either by its referral or their appeal. Besides being a nuisance this was a definite sanction: no minister could expect sympathy for taking cabinet's time too often in this way. The Board's members built up "a sort of collegial spirit" rare in other committees⁶⁸ and a bulwark of the Board's position. Ministers, it was explicitly recognized, served on the Board "in their general Ministerial capacity rather than as representing their portfolios"⁶⁹.

The Treasury Board more than any other committee exercised real collective decision-taking authority and responsibility under the cabinet, though limited by its focus and the general emphasis upon individual ministerial responsibility. The Treasury Board is the outstanding example of collegial decision-making in the St. Laurent cabinet.

The Cabinet Committee on Legislation⁷⁰ also facilitated and furthered collective decision-taking, though it too was not a "regular"⁷¹ committee and did not make policy decisions itself. Its virtues were more mechanical than substantive, but they were substantial. According to Harris writing in 1956, the Legislation Committee prepared

"legislation well in advance of the Session so as to ensure a year round work load. When a Minister decides upon a change of policy or an improvement in existing policy, a short statement of the principle involved is prepared which, after notice to all other Departments likely to be affected, is considered by the Committee ... the Committee passes the papers, suitably altered where necessary, to the Cabinet. After approval in principle a bill is drafted in the Department of Justice and goes to the Committee for a review before going on to Cabinet"⁷².

This committee was the major concrete and permanent innovation in the St. Laurent cabinet committee structure, which in itself demonstrates the government's reliance upon informal structures before organization. The committee was formed in June 1952 after years of complaints about the uncoordinated preparation of legislation⁷³. The proposal for such a committee was first put to cabinet by Garson in 1949⁷⁴. The problem was that legislation "was prepared pretty much on an ad hoc basis at the departmental level, with the result that not infrequently a considerable volume of bills were [sic] sent in to Cabinet for consideration at the last moment", so that "proper consideration...

[of] the matters of substance" was hindered, drafting of legislation was rushed, and bills were frequently not introduced until late in the session⁷⁵.

The Legislation Committee was finally established with the support of a new Secretary to the Cabinet "to prepare, for Cabinet consideration and approval, the government's legislative programme for future sessions, to keep the legislative programme under constant review and to undertake a detailed examination of all draft bills"⁷⁶. It was backed by a set of regulations specifying the course for the submission of legislative proposals, followed by explanatory memoranda and draft bills, through the committee. It was intended that "the process of preparing legislation... [would] be extended over the whole year rather than confined to the short period immediately preceding and during the session"; that departmental proposals would be put together in a legislative programme with rough priorities for cabinet approval; and that ministers, departments and legislative drafters would agree together on the specific content and form of legislation while checking that the policies cabinet decided on were the ones carried through⁷⁷.

Any hopes - and there may have been some⁷⁸ - that the committee would play a really substantive role in policy-making were not fulfilled. The cabinet continued to discuss and approve the principles and substance of

legislative proposals, after some preliminary vetting by the committee. Participants recall that the committee occupied itself mainly with the details and drafting⁷⁹. This was inevitable, and what most seem to have intended anyway. The committee was set upon the top of a bottom-up process in which departments had the initiative; the committee merely asked them once a year to submit their proposals⁸⁰. The legislative programme tended to be made up in practice of whatever was ready to be legislated. The committee received the proposals already "pretty well developed"⁸¹, and its priority-setting was not at a high level. Of course details can have important substantive effects and the committee was useful in allowing politicians to exercise their judgement on such matters, but substantive issues were checked against cabinet decisions and, if new or unclear, were referred back to cabinet.

The committee's viewpoint was first of all a legal one, and secondly political. Its narrow influence was both reflected in and fostered by its membership. It was chaired by the Minister of Justice and its second member was the House Leader⁸². Naturally the ministers responsible for legislation met with the committee, but its members tended to be junior ministers - those with legal training, plus a couple of the politically-minded, as a minister put it, "to look at the draft to see if there was any political dynamite in it"⁸³. Its particular concerns apparently made officials

prominent in its life, encouraged some problems of ministerial attendance, and allowed the Minister of Justice fairly to dominate it.

But the Legislation Committee was effective within its limits. No organizational system would be asked to achieve very high impersonal efficiency in this government: in 1957 "To say that this system has worked perfectly would be something of an overstatement"⁸⁴. Nevertheless, its existence also demonstrated the government's regard for a real if flexible orderliness: the committee soon settled into an active role, especially before and during each session. As was written at the time, it "assumed a position of considerable importance and ... greatly facilitated the work of the Cabinet"⁸⁵.

- Broad and Continuing Policy Committees

First under Pearson, and vigorously and predominantly today, the emphasis has been upon standing cabinet committees "directed toward defined areas of the total governmental process"⁸⁶. Under St. Laurent there were few, but the beginnings were there.

The first of these committees, and the model for their subsequent development, was the Cabinet Defence Committee⁸⁷. It inherited a unique stature from its wartime predecessor. With the three operational committees, it was identified as being of a "different nature" from the rest⁸⁸. It was distinguished from them by its policy focus

and nearly "executive" status (the term used today to denote committees with authority to decide policy issues, subject to a relatively automatic cabinet imprimatur). It was larger, more formally organized, and conducted more serious and substantive discussions than other policy committees.

It was considered an active committee as St. Laurent committees went, and moreover relatively consistently active. Nevertheless it apparently met less often than once a month, except in 1951 during the Korean War, and after 1953 no more than once every two months on average⁸⁹. Its meetings were not regularly scheduled (though that was proposed⁹⁰), but tended to be spaced fairly regularly however many or few meetings a year there might be. The meetings were pretty formal occasions for a committee, a minister recalled⁹¹, involving quite a bit of preparation by the committee's P.C.O. secretariat, the Department of National Defence, and various official and military committees which "comprise the Defence Organization which is directed by the Cabinet Defence Committee"⁹². Agenda and documentation were circulated beforehand, the meetings numbered, and conclusions circulated afterwards.

The Committee's terms of reference were "To consider Defence questions and to report to the Cabinet upon major matters of policy relating to the maintenance and employment of the three services"⁹³. All important issues of defence came to the committee, and it was supported by a

real desire to use it on the part of successive Ministers of Defence and their department⁹⁴. It was, a participant recalled, the normal course for defence matters to go to the Defence Committee before cabinet⁹⁵. Though "the working rule has been that all decisions requiring the expenditure of money and all decisions with clear political implications become recommendations... for the consideration of Cabinet"⁹⁶, the Defence Committee was in practice more than merely advisory even when it reported its advice or decision to cabinet (and St. Laurent and his P.C.O. tried to be conscientious in this regard)⁹⁷.

The membership of the committee contributed greatly to its importance. It was chaired by St. Laurent, though much of the chairman's day-to-day work was done by the Minister of Defence. It included the Ministers of External Affairs, Finance, Trade and Commerce, Justice and two other closely concerned ministers. Other ministers were occasionally invited, one or two quite often, but pressures for expansion were resisted - and pressures there were to get on to this most influential and prestigious committee⁹⁸. In fact the committee's size was much increased by attendance of senior officials and military officers. More than several were members in all but name⁹⁹. Moreover they really did debate policy with ministers in this committee, and with each other, participating "very fully in the discussions"¹⁰⁰. It is no wonder that when this aggregation of

political, official and military weight reached a consensus it normally prevailed. And it is no wonder that the Defence Committee figured, with Treasury Board, as one of the two most important committees in every memory.

The Defence Committee stands by itself in this category of the committee structure, in its time and as a portent of the future, but it was not quite alone. Its fellows, however, were so weak they highlight it. They were prototypes perhaps, and minor portents themselves, but they did not survive the rigours of the characteristic negative and ad hoc views of committees held during the St. Laurent years. One committee has been mentioned: the Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy was formed in 1949, lay dormant within a year, and sunk without trace shortly after¹⁰¹. It likely succumbed to those views, to the opposition or indifference of the important ministers concerned, and - perhaps - to the strength and vitality of its supposedly subordinate interdepartmental committee. Another committee of this sort was proposed in 1949, a Cabinet Committee on External Affairs (evidently a counterpart of the Defence Committee), but it was nipped in the bud before it could wither on the vine¹⁰². There was a third, less potentially comprehensive than these two, and it survived - but in a way that graphically demonstrates the difference between formal theory and informal practice, and the superiority of the latter in the St. Laurent government. The Privy Council

Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research¹⁰³ dated back to 1916 and had statutory status, yet it had never been very active. During the St. Laurent years it met several times, but never after 1951. Its functions were carried on to all intents and purposes by its chairman. It was only really revived over a decade later.

The broad and continuing policy committee might have been the wave of the future, but under St. Laurent it would have been only a ripple without the powerful Cabinet Defence Committee.

- Ad Hoc Issues Committees

The final part of the cabinet committee structure was its largest. The very large majority of St. Laurent committees was made up of ad hoc committees of special purpose, directed at particular issues, and essentially temporary in duration (even when sporadically active over a period of years). As the St. Laurent government declined so did their numbers and activity. Even at their most active most never met more than three or four times over a like number of months. A number of these committees were very useful, and most of them made some contributions, but none came close to the stature of the leading committees already discussed. They formed a large, shifting group, somewhat fuzzy at the edges, around the more central committees. Their variety in use, issue, and behaviour is

their most striking joint feature. They can, with only a little violence, be put into two overlapping categories.

Some committees tended to continue over years, employed periodically (whenever cabinet was reminded of them) to "consider and advise the cabinet"¹⁰⁴ on particular quite detailed proposals or concerns within their slightly broader continuing area of interest. Often these committees persisted on the books long after they ceased functioning in practice. One variant included a few committees, such as those on Television Policy¹⁰⁵ and Broadcasting Policy¹⁰⁶, which helped formulate fairly important policies in areas where no one minister was clearly responsible. Another variant included committees dealing with more specific areas in which questions cropped up from time to time, although the committees usually were first set up to deal with one particular instance. Examples were committees on Pensions, Pay and Allowances¹⁰⁷, Immigration Policy¹⁰⁸, and the Admission of Communists into Canada¹⁰⁹. A third variant was less ad hoc in conception but little less so in use: committees on the St. Lawrence Waterway and Power Project (two of them)¹¹⁰, Emergency Measures¹¹¹, and Territorial Waters¹¹², were used "to review any problems that might arise"¹¹³ in an ongoing project, being "called upon from time to time"¹¹⁴. Committees of this sort were relatively more common in the later St. Laurent years and accounted for

about half of the last committees list in 1957¹¹⁵. They tended to become passive overseers of interdepartmental activity aroused when required by circumstances.

The rest of these issues committees were more or less purely ad hoc, short-term in intent and fact, specific in focus, various in use. A number of committees were set up to meet a delegation or, more commonly, to prepare for and usually act as the government delegation to a conference. They included committees on such varied subjects as the 1950 Constitutional Conference¹¹⁶, the Trans-Canada Highway Conference in 1948¹¹⁷, and a Conference on the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped¹¹⁸ (although far from all conferences involved cabinet committees). Other committees were set up to consider and advise cabinet on one specific issue or report. They ranged from establishing the Canada Council¹¹⁹, to a criminal code amendment on drunken driving¹²⁰, and even to finding a site for the Civil Service Recreation Association¹²¹.

And some committees were used to settle some controversy among particular ministers without wasting cabinet time. Usually this was done informally, but it also apparently found expression in committees such as those on the Library of Parliament¹²² (whether to rebuild or reconstruct it after a fire) and on the C.B.C. International Service¹²³ (of which some ministers doubted the value). Most often this use was mixed with some other.

In fact it is clear that all these special uses could and did overlap; some committees changed their use as they went along. The Committee on Territorial Waters, for example, examined several issues over more than a year, but was also oriented towards preparing for conferences.

All the St. Laurent cabinet committees partook to some degree of these ad hoc and issues oriented characteristics. Even the Cabinet Defence Committee, unique as it was, was at one time or another almost certainly used in all these ad hoc ways. Evidently the overall shape of the committee structure reflected the government's characteristic attitudes towards committees as well as its general style.

Forms and Practices

Similarly, the course of development of cabinet committees under St. Laurent, their characteristics, and the shape of the committee structure all were worked out in the practical functioning of the various individual cabinet committees. Their forms and practices are discussed in terms of their formation, membership, size and attendance, their actual meetings, and their 'life cycles'.

- Formation

Committees came usually to be set up by the cabinet more or less formally, although the decision was actually up to St. Laurent. The suggestion for a committee

could be made to him by a minister or by the P.C.O. (not infrequently) or to cabinet even by an interdepartmental committee. Committees did not always have formal terms of reference, especially early on when "an understanding"¹²⁴ might be considered more useful. Terms of reference might be either specific or vague since it was expected that "it is not always possible for the task to be 'well-defined'"¹²⁵. The later committees, however, did have clearer terms of reference - although apparently realized through shared understanding and practice rather than any more rigorous methods.

- Membership

Only ministers were committee members. The importance of membership for a committee's influence has been described, but the criteria for membership underlay it. The criteria reflected the importance of individual ministerial responsibility with only a few touches of the later, more collegial outlook which tended to see committees as microcosms of the whole cabinet.

The essential criterion was "a minister's interest according to his portfolio"¹²⁶. In general committees were supposed to include "all the more important ministers in the field"¹²⁷, and to be "well-balanced"¹²⁸, but - with "qualifications" - "if persons have nothing to add to the discussion there is little point in their being on the committee"¹²⁹. The members of the Cabinet Committee on

Emergency Measures, despite its potential regional impact, were chosen simply "from the matters falling within their jurisdiction"¹³⁰. Members of the Cabinet Defence Committee were supposed to have "a direct interest in every agenda"¹³¹. There was a reverse side to this coin, however; some lesser ministers were added to some committees to "give them something to do"¹³². For similar but opposite reasons of workload and responsibility St. Laurent was not a member of many committees. However, heavy ministerial workload was likely not often taken into account since the burden of most committees' work was limited by their slight activity. Indeed, the strength of the portfolio criterion so overshadowed other criteria that committees were weakened in favour of informal ministerial discussions or full cabinet discussions where other responsibilities were taken into account. Pickersgill, for example, did not belong to the committee dealing with federal-provincial relations in 1955, yet he was a strong Atlantic minister, personally interested in the field, and in fact frequently consulted on it by St. Laurent¹³³.

The criterion of regional and linguistic representation was not very important in committee membership, important as it was in other contexts from cabinet formation to informal ministerial relations. In government appointments St. Laurent tried to emphasize individual responsibility and competence before regional roots¹³⁴, and

committees - however informal they seem in retrospect - were part of the formal structure of government. The question of regional representation on committees occasionally arose, but a P.C.O. official recalled it was never so "crystallized" as it later became¹³⁵. The main effect was to try to have one francophone minister on each committee, "to take care of the French-speaking representation"¹³⁶ as it was once put. This representation seems to have been fairly consistent. Of course, francophone ministers such as Martin, Lesage, Lapointe or even St. Laurent himself, were quite often on committees for other good reasons anyway. There was some feeling that there should be an attempt to have each broad region represented at least on "the main national committees"¹³⁷, but this was not thoroughly followed: the Defence Committee, for example, contained no Atlantic minister after 1954. Committees with explicitly regional impact might include ministers from the affected areas but this could easily be a result of a not coincidental overlapping of portfolio and regional responsibilities (Gardiner from Saskatchewan in Agriculture, for example, or Mayhew and Sinclair from British Columbia in Fisheries). Any general or complete regional balance in a committee was likely an accident.

A third criterion which modified the other two not infrequently, however, was that of personal interest and experience. Committees such as Legislation lent themselves

much less to portfolio criteria; its members were appointed "more for their personal qualifications and interests than for the portfolios they happened to hold"¹³⁸. Committees dealing with recurring subjects, such as federal-provincial relations, could include a member "in view of his experience in 1945 and his long association with these questions".¹³⁹ And some committees were established at least partly because of personal interest. The Committee on the Canada Council covered a new area in which no minister had a really close portfolio responsibility; it was made up largely of personally interested ministers such as Pearson (its chairman) and Pickersgill.

The choice of committee chairman was based primarily on portfolio responsibility, too, according to "the obviousness of the relationship of the subject matter to his portfolio"¹⁴⁰. Most chairmen were obvious choices: Justice chairing Legislation, McCann of National Revenue chairing Television Policy, despite the membership of senior ministers, because he answered in Parliament for the C.B.C. Usually the minister who brought up an issue was responsible for the main area involved, and usually he was chairman. The importance of responsibilities and St. Laurent's own corresponding style was shown by his chairing few committees and not acting as chairman even when a member of a committee from personal interest (like the Committee on the Parliamentary Library).

The resulting structure of committee memberships (insofar as it can be estimated) exemplifies these criteria. There was no pattern of careful allocation of memberships so each minister would have no more or less than an average figure¹⁴¹. The more important ministers with the widest responsibilities tended to have more memberships and chairmanships. However, the pattern is subject to the qualifications that which committees existed at one time depended more on circumstances than on a reflection of the important or broad issues of the day; and to the recollection that the operational core committees included many less influential ministers. Thus the only ministers with two chairmanships in a 1955 list¹⁴² of nine committees were the Prime Minister (if his chairmanship of cabinet is added) and the Ministers of Justice and National Revenue; ministers with one were Finance, Trade and Commerce, External Affairs, and Transport. The Ministers of Finance and Justice belonged to six listed committees; External Affairs to five; National Revenue, and Northern Affairs and National Resources to four; six ministers including Trade and Commerce, to three; and the rest to fewer. Ontario had disproportionately more memberships (21), resting on Ontarian Ministers of External Affairs, National Revenue, and Trade and Commerce; Québec disproportionately fewer (12) with the prime minister on only two committees and the rest relatively junior ministers other than Lesage; the West 14,

resting on a Manitoban Justice Minister and a Fisheries Minister from British Columbia; and the Atlantic provinces only six. Francophones had about one third of the memberships. Portfolio criteria were evidently primary.

- Size and Attendance

Committee size varied from three to ten with an average likely between five and seven (though a committee's size was sometimes obscure). Ministers seem to have disliked large committees and, as a Secretary to the Cabinet reflected,

"the 'small group' is undoubtedly the ideal. However, there may often be circumstances ...in which a large group is the most effective, and perhaps the only possible one. Perhaps the principle might be that the group should be as small as is reasonably possible, having regard to the task, the bodies or individuals interested, etc"143.

There seems to have been a tendency for committee sizes to grow slightly, however. It was not always the case that the larger committees were the most important ones - they might merely touch upon more individual responsibilities.

But membership was not the same as practical size. In most cases, as in one, "it would be understood that other Ministers ...would attend when items of interest to them were under discussion"144, either on their own initiative or - more often - upon the chairman's invitation (perhaps prompted by the P.C.O. secretary). Some non-members became frequent attenders - "de facto members"145 -

of some committees. Others were made members in regard to one subject alone¹⁴⁶, or informally kept closely informed of a committee's work¹⁴⁷. Some committees had small memberships specifically to allow "other ministers (to) attend as required"¹⁴⁸ - a characteristic of informal meetings grafted upon a formal committee. This typically St. Laurent flexibility and reliance upon informal relationships meant attendance sometimes helped in practice to balance committees against a regional bias in membership due to the strength of the portfolio criterion.

However, this kind of size increase was offset by the more frequent problem of poor attendance. Most ministers did not rate committees of modest influence high in the priorities for their time, an "understandable reluctance on the part of busy ministers to come to a meeting which has very slight agenda"¹⁴⁹. Some ministers, such as Pickersgill, disliked committees as a general rule¹⁵⁰. Others thought particular committees a waste of time, as Martin is said to have felt even of the Treasury Board¹⁵¹. The formal size of the Legislation Committee grew from four to ten "in order that preparation of legislation might not be delayed through inability to hold committee meetings"¹⁵².

In fact, the make-up of a committee meeting was often less purely ministerial than membership suggested. Occasionally a minister might bring a parliamentary assistant¹⁵³, but the great factor was their civil

servants. P.C.O. officials were normally present, of course, but they were not all. Although some St. Laurent ministers suggest they disliked "mixed committees" and worried ministers might be inhibited or unduly influenced by a civil service presence¹⁵⁴, it seems clear that under St. Laurent civil servants were easily accepted into committee meetings. From the position that officials were sometimes invited, the norm developed that they were only sometimes kept out for part or the whole of a meeting. It was said that "They attend, not of course as members but in an advisory capacity and in the Committee's discretion, when their departments are directly interested in the general subjects of a Committee's deliberations or when particular items of business are of concern to their departments" - but it was also true that it was "the general practice to have appropriate senior officials attend meetings"¹⁵⁵.

Participants agree that certain officials (such as the Secretary to the Cabinet, Secretary of the Treasury Board, and Under-Secretary of External Affairs) nearly always attended certain committees even when their minister was absent¹⁵⁶. There was a particularly long tradition of official attendance at the Defence Committee - by 1952 no fewer than 14 normally attended¹⁵⁷. Already by 1949 in more than a few committees "there have often been more officials present than ministers"¹⁵⁸.

Not everyone viewed the situation with equanimity. Occasionally a minister would object sharply¹⁵⁹, and the P.C.O. tried to keep official attendance down¹⁶⁰, especially in the Defence Committee (where in 1954 "there is an argument for adding a Minister merely to preserve the character of a ministerial meeting with officials in attendance rather than the reverse"¹⁶¹). There was some success with that committee, but it was not general. It was not just that pushy officials liked to directly influence ministers together. The St. Laurent ministers trusted their officials and relied on their expertise; most apparently wanted their officials present whatever they thought of others'. One reason for appointing a cabinet committee came to be to have officials present. It became customary that ministers interested only from a personal, regional or general point of view needed the chairman's permission to bring officials, but that ministers whose portfolio responsibilities were affected brought officials as a matter of course¹⁶².

- Cabinet Committee Meetings

Committee meetings were generally like cabinet meetings, but with even more of an emphasis on individual responsibility and "with a much less formal character".¹⁶³

Meetings were prepared for in increasingly organized ways, however, primarily by the P.C.O. secretary supplied to each committee in consultation with the chairman. The secretary

"would attend its meetings, be responsible...for preparation of material for the meetings and for the handling and preparation of minutes. In addition, he [would] undertake such further coordinating and liason functions as usually fall on the secretary, according to arrangements that may be adjusted from time to time".¹⁶⁴

As a general rule the minister most concerned with a subject would circulate a paper to the committee members through the P.C.O., but the secretary had to keep in touch with the various ministers and departments who generated business or might be affected, as well as keep up with his organizational chores in preparing agenda, compiling documentation, and writing conclusions. He had to maintain contact with the chairmen of the several committees for which he was responsible, even though some were much less active than others, but in most cases it seems the chairmen were not briefed by their secretaries on substance: they depended on their own departments for that.

The conduct of committees depended very much on their chairmen, but their functioning at all rested also upon individual members. Not only did they have to attend a committee meeting to make it possible, of course, but - as an official wrote - it was "for Ministers to determine when a matter is ripe to be placed on the agenda"¹⁶⁵. The members depended on their chairman too, however. Since most committees were of modest influence, and with the St. Laurent emphasis on individual responsibility, the

chairman's role was not particularly influential in itself: it was usually the chairman who could add to the committee's weight rather than the reverse. But committees were "at the call of their respective chairmen"¹⁶⁶. Since most committees were not regular, established or influential, what to do with the committee was often in practice left up to the chairman. He could let it die if he wished, though most were conscientious. He could leave it to a de facto vice-chairman, which tended to diminish a committee. He could in some cases, especially when he was clearly the primarily responsible minister, make the committee an extension of his own responsibility - the Minister of Justice and the Legislation Committee according to some¹⁶⁷ - or even take over some of the committee's functions himself.

Meetings proceeded in many ways according to their different subjects and participants. One important aspect of St. Laurent committee meetings was the participation of officials. They were not members themselves, but there was no recognized doctrine on the role of officials at cabinet committees, other than a general subordination in status (if not necessarily in individual influence)¹⁶⁸. Various chairmen apparently treated officials differently, but the trend seems clear. In accordance with the "theory that... (officials) are present merely as advisors and not to press individual cases"¹⁶⁹, officials were supposed to speak in support of their minister when asked, with an occasional

interjection of fact or instance or argument. But in accordance with the government's characteristics, "no one would seriously suggest that in practice officials would speak only on invitation"¹⁷⁰. In the Defence Committee for one, they debated policy with ministers. Their participation was an important part of committee functioning, and a notable development under St. Laurent.

- Life Cycles

The courses of establishment and decline of committee meetings often were similar (particularly among committees of similar ad hoc type). The longevity and activity of committees has already been noted in general terms. Committees other than the routine operational ones met irregularly and none too frequently. Even the operational committees met in yearly cycles according to the opening of the parliamentary session or the estimates exercise. Otherwise, for example, the Legislation Committee met only "when a reasonable number of relevant memoranda had been collected"¹⁷¹. Claxton rejected regular meetings for the Defence Committee, as implicitly for all others, because he only wanted meetings when there was business to be done¹⁷².

But there was a vicious circle here. Committees met when they had to, irregularly, and therefore when they could, according to what times were convenient for their members and were not filled by cabinet or Treasury Board or

caucus meetings¹⁷³. This meant that meetings were often postponed or even never held at all. Because there was no general expectation that matters would be taken to a committee before cabinet, and because committees depended for business mainly upon their member departments, it seems that the chairmen, members, and sometimes even the secretariat did not keep a rigorous watch for potential committee business. Again, therefore, meetings were infrequent and spasmodic. Thus the circle: this state of affairs merely confirmed ministers in their low estimate of most cabinet committees, an estimate which contributed to the state of affairs to begin with.

Most committees had their greatest utility "during their first fine careless rapture" as one minister put it¹⁷⁴. Most meetings were during a committee's first year. After the broader questions had been argued out ministers found less to talk about on any particular issue; they met only upon the stimulus of outside events, or depended upon the P.C.O. calling them together¹⁷⁵, perhaps to consider a report they had commissioned months before from the interdepartmental committee (or in some cases complex of committees) which usually paralleled each cabinet committee and pre-digested many of its subjects.

Even in 1949 one official had recognized "the tendency...to use other channels for dealing with matters which have any degree of urgency" than committees meeting

"only irregularly and at infrequent intervals"¹⁷⁶. Sometimes interdepartmental committees ended by taking over most or nearly all a committee's work, as happened with the Committee on Emergency Measures¹⁷⁷, or even tacitly devouring their cabinet committee (as seems to have happened with the Economic Policy Committee). At other times a cabinet committee's members preferred to leave its functions, if any, to its chairman: it had been concluded by 1957, for example, that the functions of the Privy Council Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research "can be carried out successfully by the chairman without formal meetings"¹⁷⁸. Other committees, like the Committee on Immigration, were "merely bypassed"¹⁷⁹ in favour of the responsible minister. It is no wonder that after the first flush of enthusiasm most committees lingered for months, even years, dormant or dying, revived temporarily if they were remembered, but essentially "withering on the vine".¹⁸⁰ The vicious circle completed itself: most cabinet committees were seen "negatively" and operated by ad hocery, were treated by ministers accordingly, and so fulfilled the low expectations of committees.

Conclusions

Cabinet committees under St. Laurent were a success in their own terms, and even successful as far as the whole government was concerned, but their terms were in

two ways deficient. First, they contained within themselves drawbacks and practices which contributed to the vicious circle of committee use. Consequently, most had relatively little influence and so were likely less able to save cabinet time than was supposed (in comparison with the scope of the area of informal ministerial relations). Second, the potential of cabinet committees was not sufficiently recognized. As extensions more of ministerial meetings, in a practical not formal sense, than of cabinet's collective decision-taking they did not substantially detract either from cabinet's responsibilities and burdens or from those of the individual ministers. This left the pressures on cabinet while putting a squeeze on the position of committees.

But none of this was fatal. There were exceptional committees which did fulfill their responsibilities competently while relieving cabinet from some of its heaviest constitutional, administrative, budgetary, and legislative burdens. Moreover, the limited view of committees was perhaps not unrealistic: the government's own characteristic outlook and ambitions were suited, and the times and the government may have required little more. When times were changing the government was declining, so the St. Laurent use of committees was not seriously tested.

In addition, there were positive developments in the structure and practices of cabinet committees. The

definition of cabinet committees was clarified and their structure somewhat consolidated. There was that vague tendency to use even ad hoc cabinet committees to deal with subject matter potentially of a more continuing nature. The Committee on Territorial Waters, for example, was formed partly because "there are likely to be continuing questions arising for at least the next year or so"¹⁸¹. The Cabinet Committee on Legislation filled a major gap. Others of a more positive than negative conception were also tried, if unsuccessfully. And the Defence Committee was in many ways the prototype of the executive and systematic standing policy committees which were introduced by Pearson (himself a veteran of the St. Laurent Cabinet Defence Committee), and developed by Trudeau. Though clarification perhaps followed partly from the gradual exhaustion of the St. Laurent government, these positive developments also were rooted in its managerial and business-like characteristics and in St. Laurent's personal orderliness.

Nevertheless, however important to an historical study of cabinet structure, in the context of the whole St. Laurent cabinet at work and its committee structure, these developments were not startling. Cabinet committees could have helped more. They were still subordinate to the government's essential structural character and conventions: as one participant put it, "Ministers didn't care much about committees, ministers just did things"¹⁸².

VII MINISTERIAL RELATIONS

"Ministers just did things": an oversimplification of course, and yet very revealing of St. Laurent ideals and practices. The importance of individual ministerial responsibility to this government meant that a large area of government operations, probably larger than ever since, was left to the only loosely and mainly informally structured area of ministerial relations. The general idea was to emphasize ministerial autonomy while expecting ministers to "get together" when their responsibilities overlapped¹. Ministers had the initiative and the responsibility to take their own decisions in their fields. This decentralization reflected ministers' styles and was meant to save their own and cabinet's time; but they knew it had to be balanced by - indeed operated through - an intricate pattern of informal consultations. This was a major means of reconciling individual responsibility and collective decision-taking.

Individual Responsibility in Principle

Different participants put the principle in different ways, but none doubted it: "Ministers did a hell of a lot [individually]"², said one official. The practice of that principle is the theme of this section. It was believed that British and Canadian precedents tended "to

show that the responsible Ministers have invariably been left to run the business of their respective Departments, provided that they kept within the policy approved by Cabinet"³. St. Laurent approved wholeheartedly. In strict procedural form, as the 1935 minute of council concerning the prime minister's powers put it, "A Minister cannot make recommendations to Council affecting the discipline of the Department of another Minister"⁴. After cabinet made its decision, "It is the minister's responsibility to see that ... decisions are carried out by whatever machinery he sees fit to use"⁵.

The implications of these baselines were profound. They interact with cabinet, prime ministerial, and cabinet committee behaviour which has been outlined. It was generally considered that, on the one hand, "a minister's department was his prime job" and he was expected to concentrate on that with "fairly few exceptions"; and on the other hand, that it was "not good form" to "interfere" in another minister's portfolio "just on policy grounds", when one's own responsibilities weren't affected⁶. There was an essential presumption, a minister said, that "each minister was a capable adult, that he understood general cabinet policies, and that if he were incompetent he would be found out and sacked"⁷. This was not strictly accurate since no minister was really sacked by St. Laurent (though a few were eased out early on), but

an incompetent or irresponsible minister could have his responsibilities tacitly restricted. Gardiner repeatedly took public postures without consulting affected colleagues: publicly he seemed a powerful unchecked ministerial baron, yet in fact he had little influence outside specific responsibilities for Agriculture and political organization in Saskatchewan⁸. Even Pickersgill, after becoming Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, found "my attention was focussed less and less on the general activity of the government and more and more on the administration of my own department"⁹, despite taking over Claxton's job as party liaison minister. It is significant, even if perhaps exaggerated, that a minister with experience in three administrations thought that "the man who submits the document has a 90% advantage"¹⁰. Strong views challenged "good form" from time to time, of course, and some ministers were allowed much broader responsibilities than others, but the basic principle and its customs stood.

Basic Attitudes of Individual Responsibility

The principle and practices of individual responsibility could not have been sustained without certain basic attitudes, however - attitudes which detracted from the likelihood of ministerial conflicts and encouraged informal settlements by individual ministers. First were

the general characteristics of the government. Its managerial outlook and business-like methods suited conventions of decentralization and ministerial autonomy. The "bottom-up" approach to policy-making was consistent with individual responsibility: it was "up to each minister to come forward with his own recommendations for policy development in the field for which he was responsible"¹¹. The characteristics of flexibility, informality, and putting individuals before abstract rules made the operation of the principle practicable. Indeed, these characteristics required an emphasis on individual responsibility as much as it required them.

Second, a basic conventional equality among ministers was necessary which was more than lip-service. There was of course a legal basis for it, and a basis in the portfolio structure: each minister had his departmental responsibilities, without either junior ministers or many coordinating ministers to confuse the issue (an Associate Minister of Defence was appointed, but he was promoted to Minister of Defence after sixteen months and his previous job left vacant). That many ministers had a status of their own before St. Laurent became prime minister helped, but those ministers who thought about it seriously believed in clear, undiffused responsibilities. Ministers were not equally important, but they were conventionally equal in responsibility. Ministers did

share the belief that each should "look after his own bailiwick"¹². The powerful C.D. Howe is supposed to have hesitated to oppose Gardiner's pet Saskatchewan dam project even when he felt Gardiner was going too far too publicly¹³.

Though violated occasionally, the third required attitude was a substantial mutual trust or respect among ministers. The St. Laurent cabinet had its share of the "clash of personalities"¹⁴, jealousies and ambitions, and it naturally encompassed political rivalries and competition for resources. But the relative serenity of the cabinet is still striking, compared with the divided Diefenbaker cabinet which nearly overthrew its prime minister or the loosely-knit Pearson cabinet or even the disciplined Trudeau cabinet from which more than one minister resigned in highly publicized dispute. The St. Laurent cabinet benefited from its ministers' long mutual experience, lack of strong ideological differences, and only a modicum of rivalry for the succession despite St. Laurent's age¹⁵. Ministers were trusted: it is notable, for example, that they were practically free to do as they liked with cabinet minutes: they were warned but not policed as by King or Diefenbaker¹⁶.

But all three basic attitudes as well as the principle of individual responsibility depended significantly upon St. Laurent's behaviour as prime minister.

Ministers could trust each other because they trusted him to support them individually and collectively. The attitude of ministerial equality took on meaning according to his treatment of ministers, though all knew he had to take account of the realities of differing abilities and strengths. St. Laurent shared and fostered his cabinet's characteristics, and believed in the value of clear responsibilities. Even though he knew Howe wanted to be given responsibility for the St. Lawrence seaway development, St. Laurent put Chevrier in charge because he was the logical choice as Minister of Transport; Howe accepted this as he accepted other St. Laurent rulings¹⁷. The prime minister also played a vital role in reconciling disputes between responsible ministers, disputes which could never be avoided entirely even when responsibilities were respected and consultations took place as fully as possible. This role was part and parcel of St. Laurent's individual responsibilities, and he exercised it, though he "did not enjoy having to settle" differences among colleagues¹⁸. In 1950 a dispute over the wheat trade between Gardiner and Howe was decided by St. Laurent in Gardiner's favour and Howe "accepted ... the right of the Prime Minister, when Ministers differed, to have the final say"¹⁹. As Gardiner said in the House of Commons, "we are quite satisfied that when we present arguments upon which we do not fully agree, if we present them clearly enough

and set forth all the facts, the judicial mind of the leader of the Liberal party and the leader of the government will so sift out the facts and so express the conclusions that, when he has expressed them, we can both agree with the conclusion that he has arrived at".²⁰

Gardiner was expressing not only a conventional fact of the prime minister's position and a political reality of prime ministerial power, but also a practical point about the way in which St. Laurent led his cabinet.

The whole structure, informal and customary as it was, pivoted upon how St. Laurent filled his role of prime minister. There were advantages to this dependence, but only so long as St. Laurent could wholly keep up the delicate balancing required: when in the grip of his later depressions St. Laurent failed to find the compromises or to assert his leadership just when most needed. The defence production debate was one example, and even the pipeline crisis might have been headed off at an early and private stage had he been at his best²¹. It was from such serious episodes that the impression grew that he was "no longer in charge of his cabinet"²².

Individual Responsibility at Work: Customs

The structure of ministerial relations was not all a matter of shifting personalities or of attitudes. It was shaped, it had to be shaped, by several specific if not

absolute customs. A continuing and coherent process of ministerial consultations was essential. Consultations were based on individual responsibilities, but they were the "how" of responsibilities' workings. Individual responsibility did not and could not mean complete ministerial independence: quite the reverse - but this government depended on informal relations more than formal institutions for arriving at collectively accepted agreements.

However, a minister had to be sure of his own responsibility, sure others would not unduly interfere in it, and sure too of others' responsibilities before he would be willing to accept and fully participate in a process of consultations - and sure in particular of the prime minister's role in the process. At a general level there was a firm custom that ministers with a proposal were supposed to seek a consensus with any affected colleagues²³; but one minister was supposed to have the preponderant responsibility to take the ultimate decision about what to recommend to cabinet, and to make the many small decisions about whom to consult: "it was up to him"²⁴. If the consultations were initiated and followed through, it was because ministers recognized the Canadian cabinet's diversity and its unity as a fusion of disparate administrative, political and policy responsibilities into one collective responsibility based upon a similar fusion

of cabinet, departmental, partisan and representative responsibilities in each minister. The customs of consultations were organized around these responsibilities.

- Consultations and a General Ministerial Capacity

The St. Laurent ministers recognized a general responsibility to contribute to collective decision-making from a broad perspective as cabinet ministers together, but this was not a vital force in the consultations process. As a practical matter, the distinction was made between pluralist and collegial approaches to collective decision-taking. The pluralist approach was emphasized, the collegial approach downplayed. Cabinet was the prime forum for broad collective decision-making, as discussed in Chapter V. Consultation was expected mainly on matters concerning other ministers' departmental or political responsibilities but not usually in respect of policy more generally. After informal consultations the views of ministers interested from a general perspective could be brought to bear in cabinet²⁵. It was expected, it seems, that a minister's best contribution to successful decisions could be made by contributing both in cabinet and through the cooperative process of consultations his point of view based on his particular responsibilities or talents when he was affected or voluntarily consulted by another minister.

- Consultations and Representative Responsibilities

Ministers' responsibilities as regional representatives could overlap any other responsibility. The importance of the representative principle in the St. Laurent cabinet was shown in its make-up and portfolio structure (even adding a department might be done partly "to provide enough portfolios to give all parts of the country adequate representation in the Cabinet"²⁶). There were frequent conversational and parliamentary references to "the Newfoundland portfolio" or "the Minister from Alberta"²⁷, and even cabinet conclusions distinguished between ministers referred to by title acting in a "portfolio capacity" and named ministers acting in a "provincial or area capacity"²⁸.

Representative responsibilities were primarily geographically based and intimately linked with ministers' partisan political roles, which were organized in a fairly strict division of provinces by constituencies²⁹.

"It was", said Pickersgill, "almost invariably the practice of the prime minister to consult the minister or ministers from the province before any important step was taken affecting that province. Moreover, the minister was regarded as the informal head of the federal party organization in provinces with only one minister. In the case of Ontario and Quebec ... there were always some who were considered more 'political' than others"³⁰.

Sometimes regional and portfolio responsibilities reinforced each other, but the representative role was essentially a political not a governmental one: some ministers maintained ministerial offices in their constituencies but they "always felt uneasy about the practice"³¹. Ministers were normally anxious for their own political reasons to fulfill their representative responsibilities and see their areas "fairly treated and presented"³². They in turn consulted colleagues from affected regions about policy proposals to avoid political mistakes in their portfolio responsibilities.

Under St. Laurent, however, the representative character of the cabinet was played down somewhat. He preferred to emphasize governmental more than electoral factors in policy-making, and what he saw as the good of the whole more than partial regional considerations³³ (a dangerous distinction to attempt in Canada!). St. Laurent was more concerned with ministers' portfolio responsibilities, recalls a participant, than was King whose concern was largely whether ministers could deliver their regions at election time³⁴. Representative responsibilities remained important but varied by ministers. Ministers from smaller, poorer or "peripheral" provinces stressed their regional representation, and some ministers were distinctly more politically-minded than others³⁵. However, St. Laurent's attitude tended to weaken the vital link between

partisan and policy interest representation. The broad interests of provinces were not divided up so clearly as they were for purposes of political organization, and on larger policy issues it was usually left up to the various ministers to contribute their regional viewpoints to the cabinet if they wanted to³⁶. Ironically, it seems that detailed partisan concerns remained strong among ministers individually while the representation of larger regional policy concerns was relatively weakened. The connection between the two is not a cynical one of simple political expedience. In this sense the managerial outlook of the government went too far. Partly for this reason the government appeared arrogant and lost its political touch while retaining its political machine.

These attitudes were reflected in the customs and practices of ministerial relations based on their representative responsibilities. There was a fairly clear custom that an affected regional representative should at least be informed by the minister initiating a policy, and preferably really consulted and his agreement sought. However, this custom became most important in cases of political specifics. It was phrased by one minister in terms of a minister not doing "anything actually in another's region" without at least informing him³⁷. The conventions of consultation became subtly weaker or narrower. Most ministers felt such consultation was wise, but did it

casually and according to the issue. A typical case would be one involving dairy products: the Minister of Agriculture usually consulted the ministers from rural Ontario and Québec because it was a potentially controversial issue of clear regional impact; and with their agreement the proposal usually "breezed through cabinet"³⁸. It seems that most consultations of this nature had to do with clear party responsibilities when decisions had to be made on particular projects or certain appointments (despite St. Laurent's disapproval of "old-fashioned patronage")³⁹. The Minister of Transport, for example, would be expected to keep in touch with Prudham, the minister from Alberta, over the construction of a new Edmonton airport. Occasionally a particular regionally representative minister might express his regional-cum-political role by initiating a policy proposal in another's portfolio field if the latter was neutral, or by directly opposing a colleague's proposal; he might win when detailed political concerns were an important part of the decision, as might apply in the allocation of broadcasting licenses⁴⁰.

Thus it was in respect of their representative political responsibilities that ministers felt particularly able to "interfere" by initiating consultation with the minister responsible for a proposal, on the grounds, as one said, of "you'll make trouble for me"⁴¹. But in practice

it seems that consultations on the larger regional impact of larger policies were less frequent, and that a portfolio minister would be angry at any apparent usurpation of his place even by a colleague acting as regional representative⁴².

- Consultations and Portfolio Responsibilities

One senior St. Laurent minister felt there were really only two important ministerial responsibilities - the second was for "area represented" but the first was for portfolio⁴³. His portfolio was unquestionably a minister's essential individual responsibility. Because it was so important, when departmental responsibilities overlapped (as even ministers in relatively self-contained departments knew well) the overlap was supposed to be taken seriously. Nevertheless there was no "systematic" view of everything interlocking with everything else (a view well-nigh dominant today). St. Laurent ministers did not seek out portfolio overlaps and even in retrospect feel they were not pervasive⁴⁴. This helps explain how they could leave so much to individual ministers and informal consultations.

Consultations were widespread. Many portfolio overlaps were obvious, and many others were inevitable or tactful. Consultation on portfolio issues was called by one minister "just a working technique"⁴⁵, and most consultation was more or less routine - Lesage and

Pickersgill spending time together on Indian education in the Northwest Territories, for example, an issue of equal concern to both.

There were, however, a number of more or less specific customs structuring the process. These customs became particularly important when larger issues were at stake.

It was well-understood that if a minister felt that something developing in his department was of concern to another minister, he was expected to contact him⁴⁶. The process was not meant to by-pass the cabinet but to further its effectiveness - ministers, as one said, were supposed to clear up cross-departmental problems before bringing a proposal to cabinet⁴⁷. Consultations took place before committees too: "On certain matters of delicacy and importance, Ministers may try to secure the concurrence of their colleagues most directly concerned before bringing the matter up at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee..."⁴⁸. For the preparation of legislation there was a specific rule: "As a first step, the policy to be embodied in the legislation must be determined in detail. This circumscribing of the objective shall be done in consultation with any other Government department or agency with an interest in the proposal...Explanatory memoranda [submitted to cabinet through the Legislation Committee] shall contain

an account of the views, if any, of other departments and agencies interested in the proposal"⁴⁹.

Some areas of policy involved the same ministers quite frequently, consulting on each others' proposals, although most consultations were bilateral⁵⁰. In the area of economics (which then referred more to overall economic development than macro-economic policy), Finance, Trade and Commerce, and External Affairs were all involved, though there were certainly distinctions among them. There were also certain overlaps or conflicts built into the departmental structure - for example between the Minister of Agriculture and whoever other than himself (Howe in the St. Laurent ministry) was responsible for the Wheat Board.⁵¹

But the emphasis was still upon clear responsibilities, even where portfolios were expected to overlap. Most portfolios were seen in terms of line not coordinating responsibilities, consistent with the conventional equality among ministers⁵². However, some ministers did have coordinating responsibilities in one way or another, above all the prime minister. The "wiser" ministers nearly always consulted the prime minister⁵³. St. Laurent's abilities and attitudes encouraged this although there was no rule demanding it. The Minister of Finance in particular was usually careful to "keep in touch" with the

prime minister and "avoid unnecessary conflicts"⁵⁴ with him - they needed each other.

Obviously the prime minister's role was unique, but the Minister of Finance (and chairman of the Treasury Board) also held very broad responsibilities. The budget was his in formulation and presentation⁵⁵, and his individual responsibility was symbolized by St. Laurent speaking in a budget debate only once⁵⁶. Usually, a participant recalled, the Finance Minister was involved in some way with any new policy initiative⁵⁷. The most formal convention of the whole consultative process supported him: "To permit proper consideration of proposals involving new financial commitments and to avoid delay by subsequent study by the Minister of Finance, prior notice of any such proposals should be given to the Minister and details supplied to the appropriate officers in his departments"⁵⁸. The directive on legislation added that "In the case of proposals having fiscal implications, departments and agencies shall take particular care to ensure that there is full consultation with Treasury"⁵⁹. Abbott insisted on this prerogative, and was backed by St. Laurent and quietly helped out by P.C.O. tip-offs⁶⁰. Ministers were aware, said one of them, that if the Minister of Finance had not at least seen a proposal involving expenditure, it might not even be considered by cabinet⁶¹. On the other hand, he was expected to confine himself to

comments, as it was once put, "from the financial point of view"⁶². Ministers were always watchful for any encroachment by Finance⁶³. His responsibilities were coordinative but within a particular range for which only he could take responsibility.

A few other ministers had less concrete or more informal coordinating responsibilities, varying from the House Leader or party liaison jobs which were not portfolios themselves, to important portfolios such as External Affairs and Justice. The latter two, with Prime Minister and Finance, are those Doern describes as the "traditional horizontal coordinative portfolios"⁶⁴. Certainly coordination in their fields was a part of these ministers' duties, and certainly they overlapped and were overlapped by other portfolios quite frequently (some more than others of course). It cannot be said individual responsibility was anything like an absolute. Yet even the Ministers of Finance and External Affairs, powerful as they were within their own fields, were likely thought of - and apparently thought of themselves - less as coordinators than as ministers with important responsibilities of a particular sort which impinged on others relatively often but in clear and clearly restricted ways.

Since most portfolios involved line (or "vertical") responsibilities, consultations were conducted on this basis. The P.C.O., as a central agency, felt there

was a real reliance on each minister to "run his own show"⁶⁵. It was understood that in most circumstances - barring the prime minister's intervention - the process of consultations was to be from the primarily responsible minister: he had the initiative⁶⁶. C. D. Howe had very wide responsibilities (including a tail of agencies from the Wheat Board to the National Research Council) and was equally widely esteemed, but even he respected others' responsibilities pretty consistently, it seems, and consulted them in at least "major matters". But in return he expected to hold sway in at least all minor matters arising out of his department: he made that clear⁶⁷. He was not alone in disliking any interference just on policy grounds, and in expecting consultation when he was affected. Most ministers did make an effort to keep the process going. As an experienced P.C.O. official said of the consultative process, "it did not always work but it was sure tried"⁶⁸.

Tactics of Consultation

Of course it would be naive to think consultation was not a matter of tactics as well as principle and customs⁶⁹. Despite the customs, the meaning of "consultation" was not always clear. It could mean close cooperation in formulating a policy, or routine concurrence, or passively received information, or last-minute

notification, or indirect communications amongst officials with ministers kept informed and deciding on priorities as they arose. The timing of consultations was crucial, the judgement of whom to consult not necessarily obvious, and the initiative up to the responsible ministers. Obviously there was scope for manoeuvring even though most consultation was more or less routine.

And ministers are human: consultations were naturally affected by personal considerations. Some ministers were particularly consulted because of that intangible factor ministers called "weight" - a combination of intelligence or originality or just good sense with a certain perceived reliability of character. Others were consulted because of experience or personal interest in a certain area, or because of notable political shrewdness. Most of these ministers gained their reputation in the exercise of their responsibilities, but it was not necessarily limited to them.

The scope for manoeuvring combined with human differences among ministers and their natural wish to compete for the acceptance of their proposals meant that an important aspect of consultations could be tactics. But participants insist there was little of the cynical dealing some like to imagine. The process was conducted under the eye of the prime minister although he did not always "crack down soon enough"⁷⁰ on the more devious tactics.

Mostly consultations followed the usual customs and pathways, and participants agree that most of the consultation that was supposed to be done was done. Ministers' attitudes to policy-making and the government's general characteristics promoted this. So did St. Laurent, openly in cabinet, quietly in his own responsibilities, and discreetly through the P.C.O. And ministers knew it was in their own interests to follow the customs of consultation, even if inconvenient at times, in order to maintain the system of responsibilities, to keep in touch with their colleagues (in a government with fewer of the formal and regular communications used today) and, in the normal course of events, to "gather support for a proposal by building up allies"⁷¹ or - at least - to quietly gauge their chances.

But often enough consultation did not take place, it seems, even where a case could be made for a real overlap. This could be for mundane reasons - urgency, laziness, or lack of perception - but sometimes it was purely tactical. Even the Minister of Finance had some difficulties getting consultation as early and completely as he would have wished⁷². Some ministers were more conscientious in their consultations; others, such as Gardiner, consulted as few as possible⁷³. It could be a fine choice whether to consult by letter or phone or over lunch or casually in the corridor. There were generally

accepted rules even here - no "specific bargaining"⁷⁴, for example - but a minister's tactics mainly depended on his strengths: as one minister described them, "his ability, political clout, character, and readiness to gamble"⁷⁵. There were guidelines even for the most ruthless - in particular don't unnecessarily offend or get into a fight with strong ministers; even when being most devious beware of not keeping the prime minister informed or of not consulting the Minister of Finance; don't alienate colleagues by wasting their time fighting "lost causes"⁷⁶.

However, though the tactics of when, how and with whom varied, they varied fundamentally around the poles of portfolio and regional responsibilities, poles about which were organized the cabinet's system of influence: with the emphasis on individual responsibility no ally was more valuable than a responsible one.

Results: An Underlying Pattern?

This raises the question of whether the patterns of consultation, even based on responsibilities as they were, formed in sum a particular general pattern of relationships.

It is obvious that some ministers were much more influential than most others. In every cabinet, said one minister, there are a few who tend to dominate the rest - and St. Laurent's was no exception⁷⁷. They included, in

particular, successive Ministers of Finance, Claxton, Howe and Pearson. St. Laurent knew that to fulfill his own responsibility for the collectivity he had first of all to keep his cabinet together, and so he "made sure" these few big ministers "didn't disagree too violently in cabinet"⁷⁸. A middle-level minister said few ministers ever objected to the stronger ministers getting together before a cabinet meeting, informally and casually - but not behind the backs of any other ministers closely involved in a particular issue⁷⁹. And early in the government a senior official referred to "the Prime Minister and the three or four of his colleagues who really have to participate on all major decisions"⁸⁰.

All of this bears out Punnett's conclusion that "the concept of an informal inner group, with a membership that fluctuates somewhat according to the issue under consideration, seems to come closest to the realities of the decision-making process in the Canadian Cabinet system"⁸¹. There were catches, however. The outstanding ministers actually had to "participate" only on the "major" decisions. Naturally the biggest ministers, influential because of broad portfolios, important regional responsibilities, seniority of status, established weight of ability and character, would be involved in "major" decisions because the issues were broad ones. It was always a question of "those who matter" on the issue at

hand under St. Laurent; but of course the reasons ministers mattered on an issue could vary.

There could be personal factors, such as a personal closeness with and access to the prime minister, which Pickersgill and Harris had: but St. Laurent was careful not to favour them unduly. There could be reasons of ideological tendency for importance on certain issues - some like Martin were relatively to the left and some like Winters to the right - but mostly ministers shared with St. Laurent the generally conservative and managerial approach to government which tended to smooth over policy differences. There could be reasons of regional representation, and some ministers were clearly political monarchs of their provincial domains - Gardiner or Pickersgill, for example.

Some reasons ministers mattered on issues were more consistent. It is clear that St. Laurent's cabinet, like any other, depended heavily upon the never very numerous "ministers who actually originated important policy"⁸², those with more imagination and originality than most. This group seemingly did not precisely correspond to the most powerful ministers, and included apparently Martin and Garson as well as Howe and Claxton, but not Abbott or Harris (Ministers of Finance were not normally great originators of policy anyhow) or Pearson (except within his own exclusive concerns with NATO and the United Nations).

Moreover, the ranges of these ministers were different. Garson had a particular understanding and influence in federal-provincial relations, for example, and Howe in industrial development and relations with business.

It was no accident that these interests were oriented around their portfolios: interests and responsibilities were purposefully linked and fed on each other. Ministers were divided by their portfolio responsibilities just as each was strengthened by his own. It was clearly recognized at the time that all ministers were limited by the watchfulness of their colleagues, suspicious of anyone "trying to encroach on the preserves of any departments", and particularly suspicious of the most powerful departments, "the Department of Finance most of all because of the control and review functions it carries out"⁸³.

It was evident that the personal, ideological, regional, and portfolio factors that made ministers important also divided them. Moreover, this was reinforced by the emphasis upon individual responsibility. The idea was implicit that inner cabinets superimposed on the structure of responsibilities would be illegitimate. The St. Laurent government inherited from "Cabinet War Committee days" a "restricted circulation" of full cabinet conclusions to only the prime minister and five senior colleagues; however, circulation was made universal in 1953

because it was in accordance with the government's principles, because the restricted "practice might be taken to imply the existence of an inner Cabinet"⁸⁴.

Certainly some ministers were more influential than others. Certainly, too, some areas of policy brought certain ministers together quite frequently, and in consultations before cabinet - Pearson, for example, preferred to work out policy with Claxton and St. Laurent beforehand⁸⁵. On the other hand, some ministers never had much attention paid to them except within their relatively narrow portfolio and political responsibilities nor tried to exercise much influence outside them. But in the main the practice of St. Laurent ministerial relations was consistent with the portfolio structure constructed and seen primarily as a vertical conglomeration of conventional equals rather than a combination of two types, vertical and horizontal coordinative portfolios.

The cabinet was "baronial" more than others since, but not so much as sometimes suggested⁸⁶. The powerful ministers did not simply concert policy together, nor could they at the other extreme formulate policy completely on their own. Cabinet brought ministers together for important collective decisions. St. Laurent as prime minister was an essential if subtle link conducting the ministerial relations leading to collectively accepted decisions. The structure deliberately depended on

emphasizing individual responsibilities, and on able ministers fulfilling those responsibilities, particularly the chief ones, as individuals not mere bundles of roles. Toward the end of the St. Laurent government the essential problem was not that there were over-powerful ministers, but that there were too few able and powerful ministers at all. The cabinet leaned too much on a declining St. Laurent and an energetic but one-sided Howe; they didn't take too much on themselves.

VIII THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

Behind the formal cabinet structures and even the informal realm of ministerial relations functioned the cabinet machinery operated by the Privy Council Office. Essentially its job was to make the other elements of cabinet structure work, especially the more formal arrangements, or at least to worry if they weren't working well. Its formal functions as cabinet's secretariat made up its "charter" roles, but its functioning went beyond them - it had to in order to fulfill them properly. Involved in all this was a fundamental duality of P.C.O. roles, as cabinet office serving the cabinet as a whole and as prime minister's department serving him in particular. The duality posed certain problems. They in turn were dealt with by a number of rules of thumb or conventions - depending very importantly upon the Secretary to the Cabinet - which structured the P.C.O.'s performance and expressed its roles.

Organization

By St. Laurent's time the P.C.O. as cabinet secretariat was well established. It was organized largely on the course set for peacetime operations under its first Secretary, Arnold Heeney.¹ However, the new political administration roughly coincided with a new P.C.O. regime,

with the departure in March 1949 of Heeney and (a few months earlier) his principal assistant John Baldwin. The period of P.C.O.'s establishment and its post-war reorientation had come to an end².

Under St. Laurent the essential characteristics and outlook of the P.C.O. remained fairly constant, although different Cabinet Secretaries clearly had an effect upon its operations. One P.C.O. officer believed that "because of the character of the position, it is to be expected that [he]... will always be a person of recognized ability and prestige"³. Norman Robertson (1949-1952) was in the brief P.C.O. tradition a top External Affairs man. His seems to have been a generally quiet, reticent and diplomatic P.C.O. His successor suggests Robertson did not develop an easy and close enough relationship with St. Laurent⁴. J.W. Pickersgill (1952-1953) was formally a civil servant but had been a key political operator in King's and St. Laurent's Prime Minister's Offices: he was conscientious about his new position but the change of role produced more strains and disadvantages than had been expected, and he left to join the cabinet before the 1953 election⁵. However, as Cabinet Secretary Pickersgill undertook some reorganization and review of procedures⁶. After an interim period R.B. Bryce took over in 1954, coming from heading the Treasury Board Secretariat (the other important central agency): he

remained Secretary until 1963. Bryce was one of the civil service giants. He did not change the P.C.O.'s essential character, although he initiated "a period of consolidation of regulations"⁷ in 1954-1955, but he brought this P.C.O. to its highest pitch of performance, making it a model able to bridge two very different governments and serve both effectively.

There was a general expectation that most personnel below the Cabinet Secretary would be seconded from other departments, would not be recruited as experts, and would be relatively senior in status⁸. In practice only "a few...are usually on loan from other departments"⁹. Only one man served as assistant clerk of the Privy Council through the St. Laurent years and three in the two assistant secretary positions (all four came from the P.M.O. or within the P.C.O., although they had departmental experience). The assistant secretary who returned to departmental work in 1953 was R.G. Robertson who later succeeded Bryce. Thus there was a certain stability and homogeneity immediately below the Secretary, though the rest of the P.C.O. establishment was not particularly stable¹⁰.

However, there were not many people involved. There was little fluctuation in the size of St. Laurent's P.C.O.: as St. Laurent himself said, "The estimates of the Privy Council Office are almost entirely routine in nature

and show little change from year to year ...In a small office of this kind, minor changes ...reflect changes in the workload and in the normal turnover of personnel ..."¹¹. Pickersgill amalgamated P.C.O. and P.M.O. administrative services, and the total number of employees for the two offices remained in the upper eighties throughout: the number of P.C.O. officers fluctuated but stayed well below 20¹². The P.C.O. was small and informal, suiting the government's characteristics. Most of its less mechanical and more important work fell on very few shoulders, largely the Secretary's alone.

The P.C.O. consisted of three parts: the section of administrative services; a section "looking after the legal side of Cabinet business"¹³, mainly around the Special Committee of Council ("the Privy Council Office proper"¹⁴); and the cabinet secretariat making up the bulk of P.C.O. officers and activities. There was no one constant organization of the secretariat. It was flexible, suiting its personnel and the government's changing concerns before any plan¹⁵, but its 1952 organization¹⁶, as a typical picture, was made up of the Council business section; a registrar's section (circulating cabinet documents); and sections on defence (including scientific and northern development matters) and "General" (social security, immigration, legislation, etc.).

Organization charts changed, however, for it was fundamental that "usually we seek ways around the theoretical to accomplish the practical"¹⁷.

The Basic 'Charter' Duties

The St. Laurent P.C.O. was not yet very far from its origins, nor was the government very different; indeed there was less work than in wartime. The 'charter' of the P.C.O., setting out the central and relatively formal functions which justified its existence and its authority, was still the 1940 Order-in-Council appointing Heeney Secretary to the Cabinet¹⁸. It set out his traditional legal responsibilities as Clerk of the Privy Council and his "duties of a secretarial nature" for preparing and circulating cabinet's agenda, documentation, conclusions, and decisions, for "liaison" between cabinet and its committees, and for "such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him" by cabinet - all, however, "under the direction of the Prime Minister".

The cabinet procedures document elaborated these formal functions into specific practices. The corresponding secretarial work occupied most of the time of P.C.O. staff, officials recall, and most of their organizational thinking went into the details of how best to carry it out¹⁹. The relatively straightforward work of the "Privy Council Office proper" was burdensome but, as one minister

said at the time, "valuable" - saving him at least once "from what would have been a most embarrassing situation"²⁰. The secretarial work was heavy and often delicate, particularly when preparing conclusions since the P.C.O. "generally [had] to gauge [the] decision"²¹. Committee meetings, too, particularly as they became better defined and organized, involved a great deal of work.

There were numerous problems to be dealt with. Ministers accepted the P.C.O. in principle and seldom queried the conclusions²², but sometimes seemed to feel the application of procedures should be mainly to other ministers. It was a "perennial difficulty"²³ that ministers did not advise the P.C.O. of cabinet items in advance. Documents were often submitted "only at the eleventh hour"²⁴. And the P.C.O. sometimes found itself asked by departments "to fill in the blanks"²⁵ because ministers were slow in advising them of decisions. Repeated circulation of the procedures document had only modest effect, it seems, and "additional harassing of departments"²⁶ or "discreet pressures"²⁷ provided only temporary relief. The informal and individualistic traits of the government no doubt encouraged these difficulties. Nevertheless, improvements were made.

Beyond the Charter: The Fundamental Duality of Informal Roles

The P.C.O. also performed less mechanical and more subtle informal roles, which in sum expressed the duality in the P.C.O.'s position between cabinet office and prime minister's department.

- The P.C.O. as Cabinet Office

This first role was primarily an extension of the formal charter roles through the inevitable personal interactions required to perform them. As an extension of its procedural functions the P.C.O. was cabinet's (and of course the prime minister's) organizational shepherd²⁸, and the Secretary the cabinet's chief advisor on machinery and government structure (not always through the prime minister). The P.C.O. kept track of committees, for example, and usually advised on their establishment and abolition. Its thrust was towards greater definition and consolidation - as in setting up the short-lived Economic Policy Committee or the designation of a permanent chairman of the Special Committee of Council. It proceeded fairly conservatively, however, without overall planning or sweeping reforms. Most P.C.O. officials seem to have been wary of too much formalization, as were ministers of course, and preferred to meet problems as they arose with solutions as they came to hand. McCann was designated chairman of the Special Committee only when he asked, since

he "normally [took] the chair" already²⁹. As Pickersgill, himself something of a reformer, expressed the attitude, "I don't want to be a 'new broom' but I do want to do what I should"³⁰.

The P.C.O.'s performance as cabinet office took on a larger dimension as a central coordinative agency helping cabinet in its collective decision-taking, limited as this dimension was by certain problems and conventions. P.C.O. staff tried to keep in touch with what departments were preparing for cabinet, maintaining especially close relations with the ministries most often involved in general cabinet issues (Treasury Board, Justice, External Affairs, and Defence)³¹. Similarly the secretaries of cabinet committees undertook "such further coordinating and liaison functions as usually fall on the secretary, according to arrangements that may be adjusted from time to time"³², and tried to ensure all affected departments were brought into discussions³³. P.C.O. staff put in a "great deal" of work serving on, and as secretaries to, interdepartmental committees - of 34 listed in 1955 only one had no P.C.O. presence of some sort³⁴. After all, "one of the primary purposes of establishing the Cabinet Secretariat was to provide better coordination to the work of interdepartmental committees and a link between them and the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees"³⁵.

The P.C.O. also acted as a coordinating agency more generally, helping - for example - "to improve coordination in dealing with defence matters through strengthening the defence section of the Cabinet Secretariat"³⁶, and to coordinate the preparation of legislation (with Justice and the Legislation Committee)³⁷. But despite one or two areas such as emergency measures planning where the P.C.O. was "charged with [a] general coordinating function to keep in touch with [the] various aspects"³⁸, P.C.O. coordination "could not be pursued too actively or with much authority", as one official recalled³⁹. P.C.O. "follow-up" to cabinet decisions had been a formal process of enquiry until 1948⁴⁰, but that seems to have been a complete failure and was dropped in favour of an informal "check with departments"⁴¹. P.C.O. coordination was voluntary not authoritative, and acted through contacts not subordinates - but the P.C.O. network of contacts and committee functions was a wide one.

The P.C.O. tried to maintain a rough and informal overview of government activities. It needed to do so in order to assist the cabinet, committees, the prime minister and itself. Overview information was also essential in another coordinating activity: trying to help along the ministerial process of consultation. P.C.O. tried to identify developing potential disputes or areas requiring consultation and let ministers know about them

(particularly trying to "help-out" Treasury Board by phoning somebody "whenever any of us get to know of an item with which we think that they might be concerned" - but "there is little else that can be done"⁴²). The P.C.O. could only "inform and suggest" gently and informally. Moreover its information net was not comprehensive: it "knew less and knew it later" than the P.C.O. does today⁴³. Trusted as it usually was, however, P.C.O. was sometimes used by ministers as a convenient channel among them, occasionally even to cabinet, or to the prime minister (at least once with an implied threat of resignation)⁴⁴.

In all of this the Cabinet Secretary's role was vital. He was the most senior civil servant, of "relative neutrality as between departments", and in close "contact with the Cabinet and the Prime Minister"⁴⁵, the relationship with whom lent him an unrivalled official prestige and influence.⁴⁶ Pickersgill spoke of "the close and confidential relations between Prime Minister and Secretary to the Cabinet which is so important to the smooth and efficient operation of government."⁴⁷ The secretary had a "staggering"⁴⁸ workload. In 1952 he had his cabinet and cabinet committee secretarial duties and was as well chairman of 15 interdepartmental committees and member of four more.⁴⁹ He could, it was expected, exercise a personal and informal overview⁵⁰ and, said one official, could

occasionally "knock [interdepartmental] heads"⁵¹, based on his prestige, position, and contacts. Robertson was perhaps too reserved; Pickersgill's contacts were extensive but of a more political nature; Bryce's financial expertise, Treasury experience, and personal stature gave him many widely-distributed connections "who talked to him casually and voluntarily"⁵² about matters coming up. Yet even he was limited, and his influence very much personal rather than institutional: he had no authority "inherent in the office as such"⁵³.

- The P.C.O. as Prime Minister's Department

The Secretary to the Cabinet was even more important in P.C.O.'s second role. He needed to have a close and special relationship with the prime minister, as well as being accepted by ministers and the civil service as fair and helpful to them. He shaped the P.C.O.'s functioning and success in this role even more than as cabinet office. He was the link between the two roles and had to establish the delicate balance between them.

The P.C.O. operated "under the direction of the Prime Minister", and - as a senior officer wrote - it "will, presumably, always be associated with the Prime Minister, and the Secretary to the Cabinet will be in the position of deputy minister to the Prime Minister"⁵⁴. Both as head of the P.M.O. and P.C.O. Pickersgill believed "my sole task was to serve the Prime Minister"⁵⁵. But the

P.C.O. was quite different from the Prime Minister's Office: that was his political office "analogous to the office of a Minister", normally staffed by partisans, in general handling "matters that related to the position of the Prime Minister as a minister and as a member of Parliament rather than as the head of a department or of a government administration"⁵⁶. "The responsibilities of the [P.M.O.] for Cabinet business were minimal"⁵⁷. The prime minister was naturally free to use his P.M.O. staff in "dealing with the various Ministers on matters of policy", and he certainly did with Pickersgill but as "a rather exceptional arrangement" (and Pickersgill eventually moved to the P.C.O.). Instead "in practice he finds it convenient" to use his P.C.O. staff, mainly the Secretary, "because of their knowledge of the Cabinet discussion on various matters"⁵⁸. For governmental and policy matters, but distinct from political affairs, the P.C.O. was the prime minister's department insofar as he had one. This role matched St. Laurent's own conception of his role as prime minister very well.

The P.C.O. was the prime minister's agent in his role as head of cabinet machinery; it was "his official arm"⁵⁹. Clearly this easily integrated with the P.C.O.'s similar role as cabinet office - so that the P.C.O. watched over cabinet committee membership as well as organization. The P.C.O. was less neutral as the prime minister's agent,

however. Occasionally the P.C.O. passed on St. Laurent's views to a minister (or suggested such a contact to him); as one senior minister reflected, the P.C.O.'s policy influence upon ministers was slight "except to the extent it was reflecting the ideas of the P.M."⁶⁰. In areas in which St. Laurent was particularly interested, such as the federal-provincial fiscal equalization formula, in officials' committees P.C.O. might not be "as neutral as we should have been"⁶¹. Most often the P.C.O. was concerned with injecting a certain dynamism into government operations, with getting things moving rather than getting particular things.

Despite his emphasis on individual responsibility, with his responsibility for the collective St. Laurent was concerned to get advice on policies being proposed by ministers. The P.C.O. provided it. This function was a relatively limited one, however, since the P.C.O. was not organized to provide expert advice, nor was it expected to advise at all comprehensively⁶². The P.C.O. advised particularly in areas where the prime minister felt responsibilities, such as federal-provincial affairs, constitutional matters and senior appointments. Moreover, most P.C.O. policy advice to St. Laurent came directly and personally from the Cabinet Secretary. As a rule the advice was more general than specific, wisdom rather than expertise: instead of advancing proposals the Secretary

normally helped St. Laurent "crystallize issues" and "focus on ambiguities", helping to "expose something so the prime minister could make up his mind"⁶³. Of course this personal relationship varied with different Secretaries. Pickersgill's wide curiosity, ingenuity and close friendship with St. Laurent and other ministers, but lack of governmental expertise, apparently made him most useful as a "sounding board" - "90% of [his] use...was as someone to talk to"⁶⁴. This is not to downplay his involvement in policy discussions - he "could continue as adviser to the Prime Minister on government policy", he said, "as well in one office as in the other", and "was often drawn into discussions with ministers about the development of policy or the conduct of administration, just as other deputies were with their ministers"⁶⁵. However, Bryce's more traditionally official outlook had its effect, and his experience and expertise in financial and economic matters likely made his advice in these areas particularly considerable. Pickersgill not surprisingly found St. Laurent depending more and more on Bryce "for advice on matters of policy"⁶⁶.

But most PCO advice was not really advice, but rather briefing; the distinction is between guidance and information. P.C.O. was concerned with keeping the prime minister fully informed - what arguments had been considered in the background of issues, by whom and when,

whether there were personal ramifications, where potential troubles might lie, with a personal (not institutional) opinion if asked⁶⁷. This was what was meant by "the question of seeing that the Prime Minister is adequately briefed"⁶⁸. Briefing in those days was likely not very comprehensive, was mostly oral or perhaps half a written page on an item, and usually from the Cabinet Secretary himself. But this briefing was very important for St. Laurent's style as prime minister.

Clearly these functions as prime minister's department reflect back upon those as cabinet office: the duality was not a division. Both roles, and the basic charter duties, depended upon having the backing of the prime minister and the trust of ministers. P.C.O. had the former throughout and a tradition of the latter, but it had to work continually to maintain it.

Problems and Principles

The duality of roles presented potential difficulties. The problems were essentially ones of balancing, adjusting, and reconciling the different roles and their requirements. The St. Laurent P.C.O. succeeded quite well, but perhaps at some cost.

- Problems

There were three broad problems. The first had to do with P.C.O.'s essential legitimacy of existence: it

was the problem of "politicisation". The P.C.O. had to be fundamentally apolitical yet politically sensitive and aware⁶⁹ to survive over time, and indeed to maintain its distinct value within any government. However, it was a continual temptation for ministers to use the P.C.O. for political purposes - and especially when ministers and officials shared the Liberal longevity. Heeney had resisted politicization successfully⁷⁰, but the principle was not yet fully established. One minister ingenuously suggested the P.C.O. formally notify regionally responsible ministers of works projects and appointments to be made, but the P.C.O. tactfully scotched that⁷¹. The danger was closest with Pickersgill as Cabinet Secretary and exercising "a general supervision"⁷² of the P.M.O., "in a sense head of both"⁷³. The Opposition properly raised the issue. In fact Pickersgill decided to resign when the danger was obvious and a political need and opportunity for his talents arose⁷⁴. It fell to Bryce to distinguish the still "rather blurred line"⁷⁵ in the most difficult of circumstances, the ultimate testing of P.C.O. legitimacy by its first change in the government party.

The second problem had to do with the legitimacy and acceptability of P.C.O.'s activities, a day-to-day balancing act: it was the problem of the appearance of illegitimate P.C.O. power. This must always affect the P.C.O., and the issue become a public one under Prime

Minister Trudeau⁷⁶, but it was important too under St. Laurent when ministers guarded their own legitimate individual responsibilities particularly strongly. The P.C.O. must have substantial stature to perform its various functions, but it was not supposed to exercise a strong policy influence of its own, or an influence beyond its accepted roles or outside its accepted means. Yet P.C.O. staff naturally had opinions and from their central position were "bound to tend to develop certain biases"⁷⁷. Moreover their grounds of power were substantial: they had their information network; they could in theory manipulate their secretarial duties; they could exploit their claim, as cabinet office, to serve the whole cabinet in any difference with a department; they could use their position as the prime minister's department to push their own views upon ministers, departments, and the prime minister himself. They would have met strong resistance from almost any minister who thought they were doing any of these things but still the dangers - particularly the third - could arise subtly, and not necessarily from unworthy motives or consciously.

The third problem was an obvious and perennial one - simple effectiveness. Various difficulties and limitations the P.C.O. encountered in its functions have been mentioned, but they were partly a result of the conventions and methods adopted in balancing the P.C.O.'s

dual roles. Though similar difficulties were probably inescapable, therefore, effectiveness could hardly be sacrificed in avoiding the problems of legitimacy.

- Principles and Conventions

The P.C.O. could not simply squat on its charter secretarial duties, nor could it go too far beyond them. It could not become too much the prime minister's own and too little itself or too little the cabinet's, nor could it keep its distance from the prime minister. It was a difficult balancing act. Moreover, the appearance of falling into the two problems of legitimacy was as dangerous as the reality: avoiding both was the key to effectiveness. The P.C.O. tried consciously to follow a number of seldom stated but generally understood conventions in order to maintain its balance. Although no doubt they were not always followed exactly, and imprecise as some are, together they contribute to an accurate summation of the P.C.O.'s place in the St. Laurent cabinet structure.

The first convention was to make the performance of the P.C.O.'s charter secretarial roles its absolute first priority, but to perform them as flexibly and unaggressively as possible. A corollary of this was to perform all P.C.O.'s work, especially its informal roles, as informally and personally as possible. This takes us back to points made before, and adds to them. The "form of minutes for each Cabinet Committee...[was] considered on

its merits"⁷⁸; the Secretary's advice to St. Laurent was oral and privy to the two of them⁷⁹; and Heeney emphasized "the very flexibility of staff and establishment which, to my mind, is an essential feature of the best organization for this department"⁸⁰.

The second convention was to emphasize a "troubleshooting"⁸¹ role rather than any more comprehensive involvement in departments' responsibilities. A corollary to this was to avoid establishing any systematic or expert briefing or advisory capacity within the P.C.O. As Heeney, again, wrote in 1949, "There may be a case for some modest and gradual increase in the Secretariat associated with the Cabinet Defence Committee as a central body for collection of defence 'statistics'. There is nothing to be said for having such a group 'advise'"⁸².

The third convention was for the P.C.O. to maintain its essentially "neutral position as between departments"⁸³. It was considered vital for the acceptable performance of its functions that P.C.O. be trusted by all ministers, and that since "the Secretary to the Cabinet is the deputy of the Prime Minister questions of ministerial prestige cannot become involved as they do in relations between the deputy of one minister and the deputy of another"⁸⁴. The P.C.O. didn't want to be seen either as a force itself in policy debates or as "just the prime minister's boys"⁸⁵. The P.C.O. concerned itself with

fostering good relations with departments generally by establishing particular contacts in each⁸⁶; by seconding P.C.O. staff from departments and maintaining liaison through them⁸⁷; by discreetly treating each department according to its minister (Howe and Gardiner were especially touchy)⁸⁸. The P.C.O. depended on departments to provide it with information voluntarily - nobody wanted the P.C.O. to seem more like a bunch of "busy-bodies"⁸⁹ than it had to. There was a clear rule against "second-guessing" departments without being very sure of the ground, and without being "open" in seeing the departmental people first. The P.C.O. abided by St. Laurent's distaste for the idea of institutionalized "independent advice": those with real responsibility were supposed to be the ministerial experts and therefore "the advisers" on each subject⁹⁰.

The fourth convention was to keep the P.C.O. small and unthreatening along traditional lines. Pickersgill conciliated a grumpy minister by saying "when I assumed my present duties, I tried to follow as closely as I could the practices and procedures already in existence"⁹¹. If kept small enough, P.C.O. couldn't do undesirable things like interfering with departments or exercising undue influence. There were costs, of course.

- Conclusions and Costs

It is clear that the potential for a fairly powerful influence upon the government and cabinet existed

in the P.C.O.'s structure, with its central position and network of information and activities. The Secretary in particular must have been an influential figure. Indeed Pickersgill concluded after leaving the P.C.O. for the cabinet that "a junior minister at the foot of the table had much less influence than the Secretary to the Cabinet sitting at the head of the table between St. Laurent and C.D. Howe"⁹². But that influence was limited by organizational constraints, by the people (especially the ministers and St. Laurent himself) with whom the P.C.O. dealt, and by self-imposed constraints. And the P.C.O. was small enough that it was able to control itself by such means. The potential influence of the P.C.O. as a whole focussed upon the Cabinet Secretary, but his influence was not yet institutionalized.

Even sensitive ministers agreed P.C.O. was not unduly influential upon policy-making⁹³. Its legitimacy was solidly enough established to carry it across the divide between St. Laurent and Diefenbaker. But it seems there was some cost in effectiveness. Heeney wrote in 1949 that "scrutiny [of certain orders-in-council submissions] is necessarily somewhat perfunctory because of limitations of time and staff"⁹⁴, and another P.C.O. veteran recalled that its size, resources, and activity were not enough to perform all its roles adequately⁹⁵. This cost was apparently acceptable. The P.C.O. under St. Laurent was

neither ineffective not uninfluentia, but it was limited and it limited itself for what seemed good and sufficient reasons. It did not break new structural ground, but it tilled and fertilized the old effectively. Perhaps the most rewarding harvest came with this "old model" P.C.O.'s success under Diefenbaker.

IX THE CIVIL SERVICE

The P.C.O. was not alone in its civil service impact on cabinet structure: the senior civil service also supported it. There is something of a Canadian legend that the civil service "ran" the St. Laurent government¹. This is exaggerated, but the civil service did exercise a particularly large and largely accepted influence within the government's structure. This influence was founded on the structure of the relations between civil servants and ministers, and on the corporate character of the upper civil service itself, but there were also important limits. Both impinged as well on the workings of the St. Laurent cabinet structure.

Civil Service Importance and Ministerial-Civil Service Relations

Civil servants as a group were probably trusted by St. Laurent ministers more than at any time since. There was general approval, not suspicion, of civil service influence because by and large it was expected to be benign. The senior civil service was not seen as in any sense opposed to politicians. This relationship was fostered by the years of shared experience of war and Liberal government - and by the roughly shared (with exceptions on both sides) managerial and "bottom-up" view

of governing. As Pearson later wrote of his rise to minister from top official, "It felt like being promoted from general manager to president in the same company: 'External Affairs, Ltd.'"². Ministers and officials "knew each other well", and had "an easy relationship"³.

These relations were also based on the frank recognition and use by ministers of the high quality of the senior civil service. A few in particular of the top officials "had tremendous influence" as one experienced minister recalled⁴, because of the great respect and trust held for them by ministers. Abbott could delegate a great deal to his officials because they included now legendary figures like Clifford Clark, R.B. Bryce, and John Deutsch. It was hard for most ministers to overrule advice from Clark (who died in 1952) only "on policy grounds"⁵ as opposed to political judgement.

But this is a reminder that there were conventions structuring the relationship, conventions which both limited and promoted official influence. First, despite their close relations there was a belief in a definite division of function along the traditional lines of "political as opposed to administrative contributions", a minister recalled⁶. It was felt officials had their place, and would participate in policy-making only up to the point where the politicians on their own would make the decisions and take responsibility for them. Officials

would contribute mainly by bringing their "expert knowledge to bear"⁷ - and by and large they did, it is said⁸.

Ministers injected broader considerations. But the other side of this division was that ministers left judgements in the official sphere largely up to officials, even speaking of civil service "preserves"⁹. This matched the bottom-up process closely: "officials would bring forward a need" to the minister, said one of them, "who, after discussing the problem and approaches to it, would instruct them to prepare a cabinet document"¹⁰.

Second, there also were more specific customs regarding officials' advice¹¹. Officials usually produced for ministers one recommendation rather than a set of alternatives. Ministers and officials agreed on this method, feeling that it did not restrict ministers but helped them because to place all official differences before a minister would "make his job harder". This custom was supposed to operate only "up to a point", with officials keeping their ministers informed and not concealing the hard decisions from them. "Thus", wrote one official of the prime minister, "we are stuck between the Scylla and Charybdis of ensuring that he is well informed on the one hand and protecting him from too much paper on the other"¹². The greater danger seems to have been Charybdis: as a minister recalled, without disapproval, there was a great deal of official consultation and "much

was worked out in advance"¹³, before most matters reached the ministerial level.

But this process varied according to circumstances and individuals. The Treasury Board was particularly dependent on its staff.¹⁴ There were cases of a weak minister with a "pushy" deputy, and of ministers too much in awe of the civil service either from inexperience or character (even Harris perhaps). Pearson is said by a close observer to have behaved almost as *primus inter pares* with his long-time official colleagues.¹⁵ But Gardiner acted much as his own deputy minister, Abbott was not intimidated by officials and retained a political perspective overall, and there was never any doubt who was boss in Howe's department. A conclusion based on cases of personal relationships is insufficient.

Corporate Civil Service Relationships

The second ground of civil service influence was the relatively corporate character of relationships among top officials during the St. Laurent years. This important element was rooted in the conventions of the ministerial-official relationship and considered perfectly legitimate by St. Laurent ministers, but may be viewed more sceptically with hindsight.

- Informal Links

There was, first, a network of relatively informal links among top officials. These links were partly a reflection of the strong customs of ministerial consultations on issues over-lapping departmental responsibilities, together with the coinciding custom of official consultation to produce coherent and complete recommendations for ministers. Ministers did not do all the necessary consultations in person, of course. On more routine or detailed matters, with the general approval of ministers, departments anticipated the consultations customs by their own "preliminary palaver" among affected departments (especially involving Finance or Treasury Board where they were concerned). Officials also recognized that to differ too often, requiring ministerial arbitration, would "downgrade each other in the eyes of ministers"¹⁶ - just as ministers might regard cabinet arbitration of their differences.

But the informal links among civil servants were broader than this. There was a great deal of "keeping in touch" by phone, casual talks, and the vital institution of lunch. Partly this was, as one official said, to compensate for the inadequate formal information network.¹⁷ Partly it was common sense: any practitioner of government takes for granted this knowledge of the enormous amount of talk, and the essential informal relations required to do

anything and to establish and maintain the absolutely indispensable relations of amity among people who have to get along with each other if government is to move at all.

These links were encouraged by the smaller size and shared wartime experiences of the civil service, and also promoted by the P.C.O. as part of its informal contribution to a more coordinated government.

But ministers generally approved of this pattern of informal links¹⁸ - it was one reason they found the civil service so useful. Ministers too benefited when, as it seems was usually done, officials kept their ministers informed of important developments.¹⁹

- Formal Links: Interdepartmental Committees

The network of senior interdepartmental committees provided a structure of formal links underlying and channelling the informal ones, which in their turn made the committees more effective. Of course there were many junior and detailed interdepartmental committees, mostly temporary, which did not directly impinge on cabinet structure, but the use of senior committees was notably widespread too.²⁰ At least one served, or paralleled, almost every continuing cabinet committee, and others too²¹. According to one list²² there were perhaps a dozen very notable standing committees covering a number of important areas from economic aspects of defence, to security, to the St. Lawrence seaway. Often ad hoc committees

or senior "working groups" were set up to formulate particular proposals or settle specific differences.

Committees could be very influential and were often quite active. Certainly they were another means of modifying the potential difficulties and rivalry of individual responsibility carried too far. They, too, accepted the convention of reporting an agreed recommendation rather than alternatives or arguments²³, so that their proposals might practically permit only a ministerial "yes" or "no". Some reported directly to or were consulted by the cabinet itself, and might even be used on important matters in preference to cabinet committees²⁴. Their reports often served "as the basis for recommendations"²⁵ by cabinet committees to cabinet. It was said as a matter of routine that "of course a Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy would only work satisfactorily if material were fed to it from a top level official committee"²⁶ - ironically, given the fate of this cabinet committee. Interdepartmental committees were particularly significant in the economic field²⁷: the Committee on External Trade Policy, containing "all the top civil servants on economics" and meeting regularly every three weeks or so²⁸, was by 1952 "really a general economic committee"²⁹.

But there were limits on interdepartmental committees, including even this one. In keeping with the whole government's characteristics, the structure of inter-

departmental committees was "dispersed and specialized", except perhaps in the areas of trade and economics, agriculture, and relatively subordinate "fringe" areas³⁰. A study of interdepartmental committees in 1966 concluded "their distinguishing characteristic is neither their magnitude nor their multitude but their individuality"³¹.

All top interdepartmental committees required the approval of the prime minister, and often cabinet also in practice³². And their strengths and legitimacy depended on conforming with the basic presumptions and methods of the government. The emphasis upon individual ministerial responsibility meant interdepartmental committees often reported through one minister who was expected to be "critically informed of the committee's proceedings"³³ - and he knew his prestige and his responsibility accompanied the committee's report. The cabinet also jealously guarded its own ultimate prerogatives for decision and political responsibility. It was far from unheard of, despite custom, for a committee to outline "the various courses of action"³⁴, and - as in one case, for example - "questions of policy" were required to be "submitted for decision" to a cabinet committee while "questions of practical application" went to its interdepartmental committee³⁵. Interdepartmental committees still only advised though their advice could be very influential in the operations of cabinet structures.

The Question of Civil Service Influence

- A Ruling Clique?

But how influential? This question is peripheral to our main structural concerns, yet it cannot be avoided in any discussion of the functioning of the St. Laurent cabinet. Not a few observers have claimed that the St. Laurent system involved such an important role for the senior civil service that -as one who worked with St. Laurent put it - "l'apogée de leur influence positive coïncida avec les dernières années du régime St. Laurent"³⁶; or as an opposition M.P. said, they were "really running the country"³⁷.

The question was brought up in its starkest form by several Diefenbaker ministers who have alleged there was a ruling clique, even called "the Mackenzie King clique", which sat atop the informal and formal links among the civil service and "ran the government"³⁸. There were good reasons to see such a clique, reasons beyond simplistic "supergroup" stereotypes. There will always be a relatively small number of top officials whose positions and abilities make them more influential than the rest. This tendency seems to have been exaggerated under St. Laurent by a "considerable unevenness between departments in the quality of their administrative staff"³⁹ noted at the time, and by the deep St. Laurent trust of the specially able civil servants. Participants recall that some top

officials and their departments were particularly frequently in touch, linked by overlapping responsibilities (Defence and Treasury Board, for example, or External Affairs and the P.C.O.)⁴⁰ and by the emphasis of this government upon the consultations conventions for both ministers and officials. In particular, there was the "fairly closely knit fraternity"⁴¹ of senior officials concerned in economic matters - the top people in Finance, Treasury Board, Trade and Commerce, External Affairs, the P.C.O. (especially with Bryce as Secretary), and the Bank of Canada - and substantially embodied by the Inter-departmental Committee on External Trade Policy.

This seems to be the group meant by the "clique" accusations. One concerned does recall that "the stuff that came up from these people who really mattered, cabinet bought"⁴². But did they constitute anything so formal as a ruling clique, beyond the inevitabilities, realities, or necessities of this government? The committee was indeed "the closest there was to any formalized inner group"⁴³ a critical official says, but its scope apparently did not extend to all substantive policy priorities or decisions and its membership affirmed this. Despite the committee, recollections suggest no ruling clique ever met as such; different observers, each from his own vantage point, recall somewhat different possible members for such a group⁴⁴. Perhaps one acute observer was most accurate in

suggesting that a real clique dominating the civil service, but not the whole government, did grow together during the war and persist in gradually looser form, declining of its own accord, for a decade or so afterwards⁴⁵. Certainly such an inner group was probably closer to being a reality then, with the top officials closer (if only from interlocking lunches at "Madame Burger's") and more influential than any time since.

Nevertheless, however close to their officials, the St. Laurent ministers did recognize the potential problems. Even some officials made an effort to avoid the danger of a too united civil service.⁴⁶ But they were not as conscious of it nor did they worry about it as much as today. Ministers trusted officials to give them good advice and proper advice. Their relationships united them. And ministers apparently expected that a certain solidarity among officials could help counteract any deficiencies in co-ordination amongst themselves.⁴⁷ The coordinating shortcomings of cabinet structures could be born because the necessities of administrative coordination at least were partially met by civil service structures.

But the St. Laurent ministers did not take the civil service to be more monolithic than it was. Neither should we. Despite the augmented authority of the Treasury Board it seems the civil service could not be a fully effective coordinator even of its own somewhat competitive

divisions - a major criticism of the Gordon Royal Commission on Administrative Classification in the Public Service (1946), a conclusion apparently still valid seven years later, was that there was no clear-cut assignment of responsibility for "the overall management and direction of the service"⁴⁸. Civil servants were divided by their responsibilities just as ministers were by theirs. Civil service relationships were expected to conform to cabinet structure by following the principle of ministerial responsibility. Officials owed their first loyalty to their ministers: the minister-deputy minister relationship was apparently seen as a real partnership rather than simply a connection; and personal association supported this. A minister says that deputy ministers worked with their staff "for the minister not for the civil service as a whole"⁴⁹, and an official reflects that "not infrequently important differences among senior officials implied or represented a difference of ministerial views"⁵⁰. Although officials normally recommended only one policy proposal, a minister believes they usually "briefed their own ministers individually on the alternatives discussed"⁵¹. Moreover, there obviously were clashes of departmental view and conflicts of policy opinion dividing the civil service. The Legislation Committee was set up partly "to control in some way the rival claims of the various departments for priority"⁵², and the P.C.O. noted with exasperation "the

tendency of officials to submit papers which closely involve another department without checking their information with the second department"⁵³.

The St. Laurent ministers also expected that undue official influence would be averted by the fairly strict maintenance of the traditional division of functions. However, this division was not seen primarily as a barrier between them but as an aid to their necessary cooperation: a close alliance of civil service and ministers, founded in mutual respect for each other's responsibilities and allowing officials to contribute their expertise and ministers to concentrate on the larger and political issues, was meant to be a "mainspring of well-run government"⁵⁴. They depended upon each other: a minister's stature required a strong departmental foundation, so that a strong minister suggested that simply as a matter of realism he was "tied to the capacities of his officials"⁵⁵; another strong minister cautioned that a "top civil servant must be known to have the minister's authority behind him to have real clout"⁵⁶.

- Conclusions

The position of the civil service in the operating structure of the St. Laurent government has probably been exaggerated by posterity and was a much more complicated process than is sometimes suggested - but there can be no doubt that the cabinet was heavily influenced by

officials. The formal and informal structures linking civil servants as a substructure to ministerial relations were substantial despite divisions and limitations. The system, as one official said, did indeed produce "agreements amongst officials which they were prepared to support notwithstanding their original positions"⁵⁷ and undesirably corporate official relationships. The traditional division between ministers and officials, a division still maintained but blurred in practice under St. Laurent, assumed that controlling the final stages of decision was enough: the St. Laurent ministers, an official recalls, did not question at which stages of policy-making influence was most effectively exercised.⁵⁸ Indeed, that traditional division of functions may in a way have made for a stronger civil service influence by encouraging civil service solidarity and the elaboration of proposals too far before the ministerial contribution entered in.

Relations between ministers and officials contributed to decreasing civil service influence and to increasing it, but the emphasis upon individual responsibilities and relationships in the St. Laurent government meant that a crucial aspect of cabinet structure was the influence of officials upon individual ministers. Civil servants, an experienced one said, "were cooking up big schemes under St. Laurent", and were very importantly engaged in

policy-making, but not "frequently, in a sense"⁵⁹ because they worked through the opposite of a comprehensive and systematic structure which, had it existed, would have brought them actively into virtually every issue of policy rather than into more scattered but important issues. A great deal depended upon individual variations. The St. Laurent structure was predicated upon this variation. There was no general fear of officially-influenced policy but rather a distaste for bad policy of any origin. Under this structure, ministers said themselves, "the individual minister had his chance" to understand and control his responsibilities, officials would respond to him and he would make sure he knew of differences among them "if he was any good". The belief was that "most ministers who were influenced too much would never have had opinions anyway" - if their civil servants ran them it was probably just as well⁶⁰.

This approach assumed that most ministers would be willing and able to control their portfolios not only as executives but with political vitality. From the beginning the St. Laurent government's characteristics were managerial: as it progressed, ministers retained their partisanship but seemed to lose some of the larger essential "politicality"⁶¹ their position and cabinet structures demanded. With the government's decline they were all too willing to accept official advice

uncritically. It was not so much that the real and important distinction between ministerial and official influence was broken by one side or another, but that the content of the desirable balance was diluted. We return to the heart of the government's structure both in principle and in practice: many of its strengths were founded upon the emphasis on individual responsibilities, but the same emphasis opened the doors to important weaknesses.

X CONSEQUENCES

Ideas and practices of cabinet structure were quite well integrated in the St. Laurent ministry. Both were more or less traditional but clearly adapted to the ministers and their requirements; it still seems to at least several participants that their structures were all that were needed. The St. Laurent ministers, as one of them said, shared a "fairly coherent view"¹ of cabinet structure. It was an unstated view, by and large, but Bryce gave a rough summary of it in notes for a speech: he saw as important reasons for the "great effectiveness" of the cabinet system, "clear location of power and responsibility, together with flexibility in method, and recognition of the manifold aspects and power of personality". The "dual role and responsibility" of ministers, "singly" and "collectively" was central, and "cabinet and its machinery must reconcile and adjust these two": in doing so, however, cabinet "is not a general management - government is not a unified managerial unit like a company - ... it is a group of units whose managers agree to act in concert - subject to central agreed control of policy, or budgets, of decisions of importance to all of them - and certain rules and regulations to which they will all agree to conform...This is not easy to achieve or maintain"².

A 'Pluralist' Approach³

An emphasis upon individual ministerial responsibility was the key structural characteristic of the St. Laurent cabinet. The approach to balancing individual responsibility and collective decision-taking was fundamentally "pluralist". The stress upon clear responsibilities, upon "the essential requirement of no advice without responsibility"⁴, was not new but was - as one participant recalled - taken further under St. Laurent. He "kept fewer of the strings in his own hands", and ministers were left to mould their roles and portfolios to fit their own personality by the autonomy given them⁵. The emphasis on individual responsibilities tended to focus on the portfolio responsibility before the cross-cutting regional and political responsibilities. Ministers "ran their departments", as a close observer said, and "met when they had to, when something required it"⁶. The St. Laurent government was "the heyday of the issue of the portfolio minister over the collective decision"⁷.

Obviously, however, individual responsibilities had to be reconciled and concerted: unity had to be achieved within and from this diversity. Collective decision-taking proceeded through a variety of means, including informal consultations as much as the formal collective institutions of cabinet and its committees, and support by the P.C.O. and senior civil service. Though

fundamentally pluralist, the St Laurent approach to combining the elements of cabinet structure so as to reach political agreement as effectively as possible also necessarily involved implications of collective responsibility.

Cabinet solidarity remained a first principle. Gardiner's near-ostracism showed its strength. Consistent with the general pluralist approach, solidarity tended to reflect acceptance by ministers after relatively little discussion in cabinet of decisions recommended by the responsible ministers, because they were the responsible ministers. In making their recommendations, however, ministers were expected to recognize that cabinet's decisions had to be such "that all will be prepared to support them"⁸; this implied their taking into consideration when formulating recommendations the interests and responsibilities of their colleagues. This constantly limiting condition could always be raised to change acceptance into real debate, and the probability of cabinet acceptance of a minister's recommendation could vary according to the proposals themselves and the track record of the minister involved (compare the scope of Howe's discretion and Gardiner's, for example).

Moreover, there were collegial aspects even to this primarily pluralist cabinet structure. Effective decisions taking into account the various factors involved,

decisions all would support, could involve all or a substantial number of ministers in actually formulating the final policy together. The St. Laurent ministers preferred not to take this collegial road any further than they felt they had to, but cabinet maintained its ultimate collective authority. Cabinet committees also contributed to this degree of collegial decision-taking, but the cabinet was its essential locus. Cabinet took the "final decisions" and "really made lots of decisions"; "most of the work done by ministers together was done in cabinet itself", said one strong minister - although cabinet also "ratified a lot". The general attitude to collegial decision-making was described by the same minister's emphasis that "the final check must be cabinet's collective wisdom of the whole"⁹.

The St. Laurent cabinet accordingly preferred to achieve collectively acceptable decisions and to reconcile the individual responsibilities involved through more cooperative than authoritative relationships. This approach conformed with the informal, managerial, bottom-up characteristics of the government by relying primarily upon interacting ministers fulfilling their individual responsibilities. It was expressed particularly by the structure of ministerial relations, but also in the operations and character of cabinet committees (they did not, for example, exercise collective decision-taking authority, nor exhibit a balanced membership representing cabinet as a

whole, as has since become the case), and in the improved circulation of papers and documents to ministers. But this approach depended at root upon the initiative and conduct of individual ministers exercising their responsibilities responsibly. Clearly more than an element of risk was involved. The most important responsibility of all in this whole cooperative process was the prime minister's. St. Laurent, both institutionally as prime minister and personally in his own style, was the keystone to the operation of this structure. The consequences of his decline for the effective achievement of collective decision-taking have already been emphasized.

Ministers were also supposed to be linked by the political sensitivity which they should bring to bear on government, and which in Canada is specially manifested by the regional representative responsibilities of ministers. Ministers and officials both recognized that the cabinet "rests of course on a successful working parliamentary and political base"¹⁰. This is a matter not only of partisan electioneering or of maintaining a political machine, but also of bringing broadly political sensitivities to bear upon the substantive problems of government and upon each minister's responsibilities and his colleagues'. One of the deficiencies of the St. Laurent cabinet structure at work was the disengagement of political sensitivity from the broader concerns of governing, so that it gradually

diminished as a force promoting cooperative collective decision-taking.

Some Consequences for Structural Practice

In sum, the pluralist approach in the St. Laurent cabinet structure to balancing individual responsibilities and collective decision-taking, rested on a belief in the virtues of emphasizing and using individual responsibilities as far as possible; but as usual in politics and government nothing is guaranteed. Some practical structural consequences flowed from this approach. It is interesting, nevertheless, that the structural workings of the St. Laurent government remained relatively well integrated. Even its advantages and disadvantages were often mirror images of each other.

A first consequence was a specialization or separateness of ministers within their individual responsibilities. Critics of the St. Laurent ministry often think primarily of this consequence, describing its structure as "semi-independent principalities with loose co-ordination", "like a field of polka dots"¹¹, and its approach as "the duchy conception of cabinet"¹². These criticisms strike upon a central problem of the St. Laurent cabinet structure, but they suppose that problem to be the whole puzzle. Specialization was never so complete as the critics suggest, and it was double-edged. It permitted and

encouraged ministers to develop particularly deep understanding of their policy responsibilities. More important, it gave scope to ministers' initiative. Initiatives usually had to develop within sometimes limiting departmental boundaries, and depended more on individuals than needs (but isn't that often true?) - and upon individuals who apparently grew stale towards the end. But the approach could work: Martin, for example, exploited his initiative to carry through (even with important compromises) a first step towards a national hospital insurance scheme despite general scepticism or opposition; there was no prior general decision to respond to a deficiency in Canada's social services¹³.

Another consequence was that the St. Laurent structure was - as a critical official put it - a "very natural vehicle for end-of-the-line confrontations"¹⁴. Differences among ministers might emerge late enough in the policy making process to make reaching final agreement or acceptance in cabinet more difficult. There was a tendency for ministers to see a colleague's proposals only when they were worked out in some detail. However, the emphasis on individual responsibilities also narrowed the range for legitimate disagreements and increased an emerging decision's chances of being relatively easily and quickly accepted even by those who disliked it. But there was a vicious circle developing, as at least one participant saw

in retrospect¹⁵: to minimize potential confrontations ministerial responsibility was ever more firmly upheld, which in turn exacerbated potential problems.

A third consequence was a developing imbalance between formal and informal cabinet mechanisms. The ministry's "flexibility in method"¹⁶ evidently had much to recommend it - everyone can see the advantages of a disregard for red tape and "channels" - but there seems to have been too little continuous and substantial formality to give definite shape to the informal or make the required formalities quite effective enough. As was said in one area but applied to others, "The system was instituted but not followed up"¹⁷. This deficiency was not at all fatal, especially in light of ministers' experience and the gradual later decline of the St. Laurent ministry, but it presented grave problems to a new ministry with bigger ideas and different habits and personalities.

There was also a general problem of inconsistent and partial coordination. Attempts were made or suggested to counter specific difficulties of coordination, between committees for example¹⁸, but they were not taken very far. Cabinet did a great deal but could hardly coordinate everything. More was left to the informal area: this was valuable but left the structure somewhat unbalanced. There were real advantages to recognizing the inevitable importance of personalities and giving them scope, but that

scope seems to have been given to able and to incompetent ministers without enough distinction: as one participant said, "the system meant there was a real problem if a weak minister was in charge of important matters"¹⁹. St.

Laurent's coordinating role was vital, and to some extent he could compensate for weak links he was reluctant to do away with; but his own growing weakness was therefore all the more dangerous. Nevertheless there were other useful coordinating mechanisms such as the Treasury Board, the Legislation Committee, and the Department of Finance.

What is also apparent, aside from any procedural deficiencies or a decline of prime ministerial energy, is the absence of a positive, demanding and inspiring sense of overall policy direction. This was more philosophical than structural. That is, St. Laurent and his ministers apparently were averse to elaborating any overall guiding directions. Perhaps Canadians preferred it that way, at least until the later 1950s. Nevertheless, the lack of planning and priorities contributed to structural problems of coordination. A concern with "if it worked" was praiseworthy but one-sided; the structure not only reflected inattention to planning but also mobilized it. Treasury Board did not act within any real framework of priorities, so that it was locked into the position of cautious naysaying to others' proposals - valuable, no doubt about it, but not creative or encouraging. There was, as one involved

remembered, "too much firefighting"²⁰ (even though the fires fought sometimes represented important successes); most planning that was done at all, an official recalled, was done by departments individually²¹. More emphasis upon collective decision-taking might have helped, though there is no necessary connection. Broad considerations of political sensitivity should encourage real strategic thinking about where a government is going, but just such considerations were downplayed. On the whole the St. Laurent ministry's record of individual achievements was impressive, but its campaign platforms and legislative strategies were miscellanies; only the overwhelming success of Diefenbaker's "vision" drove home the new lesson that by 1957 Canadians wanted something more.

PART III:

THE DIEFENBAKER CABINET

XI SETTING

The formal procedures of the cabinet under Prime Minister Diefenbaker were in most respects similar to those under St. Laurent, yet the character that pervaded the organization and - necessarily - the operative cabinet structure were very different. The contrast is an instance of the flexibility of cabinet government. The Diefenbaker experience is also a lesson in the limits to that flexibility. The Diefenbaker cabinet structure contributed towards an emphasis on the collegial approach to collective decision-taking, yet some of the St. Laurent bases of collective decision-taking were weakened. The Diefenbaker cabinet was intended to be more collegial than its predecessor, yet its prime minister was perhaps more the individualist than any other in Canadian history.

A recurring theme of the Diefenbaker cabinet structure is its contrasts and contradictions. A contrast between the cabinet's inherited formal organization and its actual behaviour, emerges as especially important. But to understand these contrasts and the Diefenbaker cabinet structure overall, we must look briefly at the political context in which it operated from 1957 to 1963, at the people who served in it, at the central characteristics of the government, and at the prime minister whose personality was more dominant than any since R.B. Bennett.

The Political Situation

When the general election of 1957 was called for June 10 few Canadians contemplated anything but another Liberal victory, another victory for "Uncle Louis" St. Laurent¹. The Liberals were in trouble, they had lost ground, they seemed old and arrogant to many, yet - and nobody more than Liberals took comfort in this belief - who was the alternative? A new leader of the Progressive Conservatives had been chosen in the fall of 1956, an ambitious loner who had been rejected at two previous conventions in 1942 and 1948, a non-anglo-saxon anglophone who already seemed to have alienated French-Canadians within his own party, a small-town westerner who was anathema to many of the big-bucks-and-pin-stripes eastern Tory establishment. John Diefenbaker was an outsider, one who could touch people's concerns with spell-binding oratory, who could say with conviction "it's time for a change", whose passionate campaigning contrasted with the tired slogans and stuffy organization of the Liberal government, whose origins and style made him a convincing champion of everyman. There was more to it than that: Liberal mistakes and some economic discontent, Tory tactics and support from previously luke-warm provincial brethren. But "Follow John" they said - the man and not his party - and many did. The polls were wrong, commentators were astounded, and Liberal ministers who too late secretly feared decimation were faced

with worse. The Government lost 66 seats and nine ministers including Howe. Though the Liberals retained an edge in the popular vote they won only 105 seats to the jubilant Tories' 112, with 48 split amongst the two smaller parties and independents. They resigned on June 21 to make way for the first Conservative government in twenty-two years.

The new government was one of hope and expectation. It was "a tremendously exhilarating period"². Ministers set out to establish their ideas, to make quick accomplishments out of campaign promises, to enjoy their new positions and Canada's new possibilities. Structure was not important to them at such a time. Everyone expected another election before long: the confident Conservatives wanted a majority, and an inept parliamentary manoeuvre by the newly-chosen Liberal leader L.B. Pearson gave them their chance. An election was called for March 31, 1958. The campaign was a triumphant progress for Diefenbaker: he was personally acclaimed and his ideas captured the country - Canadian nationalism, "a great national development policy" for Canada's resources, a "vision" of northern development and "equal opportunities for all Canadians...to create a new sense of national purpose and national destiny"³. Liberal critics of Diefenbaker's record in office were asked "Why didn't they do something about it while they were in power?"⁴, and unemployment was blamed on the Liberal inheritance. The result was the greatest electoral victory

in Canadian history: with 54% of the vote the Conservatives won 208 seats, leaving the Liberals only 49 and the C.C.F. eight, and eliminating Social Credit. Most impressive of all, the Conservatives smashed the Liberal stronghold of Quebec, winning 50 of 75 seats compared to nine in 1957.

It seemed the dawn of a new era of Conservative political preeminence in Canada - a notion which perhaps harmed the Conservatives themselves most of all. So much time and power to achieve seemed to lie ahead for a government and a prime minister so obviously, almost mystically, in touch with "the people". The enthusiasm remained, yet even at the moment of triumph a jarring note was struck when Quebec, asked to "embarass" Diefenbaker with a wealth of cabinet talent, was presented in return with only four francophone ministers (out of 23) in weak portfolios⁵. More important were the problems and failures which gradually began to overshadow the successes, partly of course because of the very extravagance of the promises. Overarching ideas of purpose and vision never seemed to emerge from a welter of smaller proposals, however praiseworthy they might be individually⁶: "Gradually", a minister admitted, "the hopes and dreams that had been so bright and clear in 1957 and 1958 dimmed and disappeared"⁷. Economic difficulties mounted. Though some problems could be blamed on external causes the government's responses to many of them began to revive credence in the Liberal

contention that only they were competent managers of government. The government may or may not have had to cancel the Arrow aircraft project and certainly had to settle a public dispute with the head of the Bank of Canada, but their bad luck in being faced with such problems was magnified by some ineptitude in handling them⁸. The excuses of 1958 looked like self-righteous searching for bogeymen by 1960. In September 1960 Conservative support in the polls was down to 38% and the Liberals' up to 43%.

That year 1960 was perhaps the turning point. Ministers made a great effort to pull themselves together. Structural reforms were considered, as will be seen. After a struggle, the cabinet's progressives forced adoption of more expansionary policies⁹. Diefenbaker made a strong personal effort to tie together the strands of economic policy disagreements. There was a cabinet shuffle in October. An attempt was made to create of a speech from the throne a detailed manifesto and justification of the will-o'-the-wisp vision of national development: yet it too came forth as a collection of particular measures. The two-year divide between elections came and went without the new life and new purpose the government felt it needed.

Even so, the measures were not without merit and an economic recovery began in mid-1961. It was too little in the midst of continuing confusions and contradictions in the government's performance. The Conservatives were again

even with Liberals in the polls of June 1961 but had dropped to 37% to the Liberals' 43% by November. Old problems worsened, efforts at solutions were blunted, personal clashes became more evident. The spectre of basic defence policy disagreements had been seen earlier; now it grew. The "révolution tranquille" in Quebec, surfacing with the election of a reforming Liberal government in June 1960, apparently baffled the Conservatives in Ottawa. The pre-election session of 1962 presented a government on the defensive, shepherding through a grab-bag of election goodies - what a contrast to the "vision" and the triumph!

If many Canadians were disillusioned, however, they were not sure of where else to go. The Liberals were unable to transmute criticism into support. Diefenbaker was forced suddenly to devalue the dollar in the midst of the campaign, while still maintaining Canada's economy was strong, but his fascination remained and his campaigning was furious - in contrast to Pearson's evident dislike of that side of politics. Diefenbaker's policies had retained him the support of the "little man" for whom he had the most empathy, the long-deprived "periphery" of the Prairies and Maritimes, and the rural areas from which he sprang. The immense majority crumbled but on June 18 the Conservatives retained a slender hold on power, winning 116 seats compared to the Liberals' 100, the N.D.P.'s (previously the C.C.F.)

19 and Social Credit's 30 (26 due to the astonishing emergence of the Quebec Cr ditistes of R al Caouette).

But the Conservative cabinet was shocked - to lose nearly 100 seats! - despite its realization of its troubles. Despite campaign assurances, only days after the election the Prime Minister announced an "austerity programme". A major cabinet shuffle in August, importing a prominent businessman to reassure and reorganize, changing the Minister of Finance, only increased and deepened cabinet fissures. Ministers had felt Diefenbaker withdraw in depression¹⁰, little was done to repair their fortunes, and when Parliament finally met in late September little was accomplished. When Parliament reconvened in January the looming controversy over nuclear weapons policy finally exploded (set off by disputes over Canada's response to the Cuban missile crisis), though in part it was only the last of a series of disputes and muddled coping with them which had frustrated and infuriated ministers and public. Amidst a murky atmosphere of half-baked intrigue, palace revolt, and serio-comic political assassination, the Defence Minister resigned, the government was defeated in the House on February 4, and after a completely muffed attempt to replace Diefenbaker as prime minister two more ministers resigned. Three others, two of them major figures, had decided not to run in the election¹¹.

And yet -! Diefenbaker the masterful campaigner emerged once again in his greatest role as the besieged loner battling mysterious "great interests" on behalf of the "average man". Nobody else particularly impressed the voters, and when the dust settled again no party had a majority. The score was Liberals 129, Conservatives 95, N.D.P. 17, Social Credit 24 (mainly Cr ditistes again). Diefenbaker was the issue, and Diefenbaker lost, yet he retained the core of rural support his ideas, programmes and rhetoric had gained him. His personality had been the ministry's greatest strength and weakness by far; but before considering his role as prime minister in detail we must sketch his supporting cast.

Personnel

The most striking thing about the Diefenbaker ministers was their inexperience in government. Not one of them had been a member of either a national or provincial cabinet, until a former premier of New Brunswick, H.J. Flemming, was imported in October 1960. They had spent their political lives in opposition. Moreover, with few exceptions they had never had to work concretely with others in an administrative enterprise: they were House of Commons men. They had had time to think about politics and political ideas, but had not had the chance of testing their ideas in practice before they entered the cabinet in their

maturity. They didn't know how to work with the machine and were easily frustrated by its inertia¹². Not surprisingly, few had any particular appreciation of, or affinity for, cabinet structure even though they could see the results of its deficiencies.

Although Diefenbaker frequently threatened to fire or shuffle his ministers¹³, in fact ministerial tenure was not remarkably unstable - a fact which must have helped in time to counter ministers' original lack of experience. Cabinet assignments were not quite set until the 1958 victory, and there was a major shuffle after the 1962 near-defeat, but in the four years in between the only notable shuffle was in October 1960. The average cabinet tenure of the 38 ministers who served with Diefenbaker over the 70 months of his cabinet was 41 months. The average tenure of a Diefenbaker minister in one portfolio was 26 months, compared to St. Laurent's 44 and Pearson's 22. The mid-term shuffle is reflected in this, but it did not involve the major portfolios of External Affairs, Finance and Justice. A more subjective point is reflected in these figures: the important changes came in a general shuffle, not as the results of specific rewards or penalties. None of the 1960 changes were serious demotions in fact (though one or two appeared to be, they were linked to political responsibilities; two left the cabinet for personal reasons). Although the Minister of Citizenship and

Immigration committed a series of mistakes, she was not moved until 1962. Perhaps Diefenbaker was not "butcher" enough - we will return to this point later¹⁴.

The size of the cabinet did increase: from 21 at St. Laurent's defeat to 23 in Diefenbaker's first really full cabinet in 1958, and to 24 for a total of some eighteen months over 1960-1962. It is suggestive not only of the physical increase but also of the increased importance of active cabinet meetings - a major point to develop later - that in 1959 a new table was made for the cabinet room, with "a leaf to extend it so that all Ministers can sit around it without undue crowding"¹⁵. But Diefenbaker did not change the structure of ministerial portfolios: as with most formal elements of cabinet structure, he accepted the portfolios he inherited. He created only one new portfolio (Forestry) which is a record of stable portfolio structure unmatched since the war.

A notable variation from tradition, however, was the regional-linguistic composition of the cabinet: in summary, compared to the St. Laurent administration Quebec lost representation (roughly 22% compared to 15%), and francophone representation was distinctly fragile (ranging from 17% in 1958 to 26% just before the end, compared to a consistent 25%). These figures accurately reflect the orientations of the government.

More important than figures is the subjective observation that this cabinet was bedevilled by personal conflicts. They formed a major theme of increasing importance throughout the government and a crucial axis of the structure of ministerial relations¹⁶. The various dimensions of conflict will be discussed later, but some emerge in sketching the major ministerial characters¹⁷.

Donald Fleming was Minister of Finance, an extremely conscientious, hard-working, humourless man of intelligence and ability but no personal tact or flexibility. As an eastern orthodox financial conservative he had continual difficulties with the expansionary deficit financing pressed upon him by the cabinet's left-wingers. His strength was attenuated as his views met with less and less support from the prime minister. His earnest insistence upon making his conscientiously held views heard made him even more an irritant to spending ministers than is usually the case with Ministers of Finance.

Alvin Hamilton - "Alvin" to one and all - was Diefenbaker's fellow Saskatchewanian, a long-time supporter, and as Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, and then Agriculture, he was the government's most explosive, inventive and wide-ranging ideas man. He was the key exponent, other than Diefenbaker himself, of the "vision". Backed by Diefenbaker's "confidence...tinged with a certain amount of scepticism"¹⁸, Alvin made sure of

getting his "Red Tory" ideas cavassed, even when they were properly some other department's affairs, but his enthusiasm - wrapped in an irrepressible earthy forcefulness - made some see him as "a bit of a nut really"¹⁹. Nevertheless, several of the government's most important accomplishments were due to Alvin.

These two in many ways represented the opposite poles in the cabinet, but others in between were important figures. Douglas Harkness was an able if distant Minister of Agriculture and of Defence. His unbending integrity on the issue of nuclear weapons, in opposition to Diefenbaker's close colleague Howard Green's deeply felt anti-nuclear views as Secretary of State for External Affairs, was one of the rocks on which the government foundered. Gordon Churchill contributed common sense and a constant clever eye on political tactics, but as House Leader much of his time was increasingly occupied with devotedly trying to instill order into the government's programmes in the House, often loyally taking the criticism for faults of his leader. Davie Fulton was a first-class lawyer in government, expert but humane, and an excellent chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation, so good that other ministers tended to lean on his abilities too much in that regard. His influence and self-confidence were much reduced, however, after he apparently gave way to Diefenbaker on a more or less public dispute of conscience having to do with a

decision really his own as Minister of Justice. George Nowlan, on the other hand, gained stature not only from his able service as Minister of National Revenue and his political sense, but also from his complete refusal - rare in that cabinet - to be overawed by Diefenbaker. Diefenbaker felt he had to make Nowlan Minister of Finance in 1962 despite suspicions of his loyalty. Wallace McCutcheon entered the scene only at the end, as a businessman appointed a Senator and Minister-without-Portfolio in hopes of bringing orderliness, firmness, and a business constituency back to the cabinet. He was effective, but too late to help - indeed he was soon severely disaffected from Diefenbaker.

The fact was that Diefenbaker's cabinet as a whole did not contain as many men of ability as it could and should have, given his vast reservoir of M.P.'s from which to choose²⁰. The Quebec wing in particular was weak, and was kept in weak portfolios - to the great discontent of its leader, Léon Balcer. The cabinet did have its quiet men of solid character and ability, thoughtful men who took seriously their first responsibility to their departments - men like Angus MacLean of Fisheries and Michael Starr of Labour - but they were too few and too frequently ignored by their more self-assertive colleagues and prime minister. The influence of many members of the cabinet depended more on their assessed loyalty to Diefenbaker than on their actual ability to contribute to cabinet business.

Character of the Government

Several points must be kept in mind throughout any discussion of the structure of this cabinet: call them the character of the government, a character which infused and shaped every structural aspect. First, this was a new government of new men, new ideas and new purposes. Their inexperience was part of this. Moreover, the Conservatives had organized all their effort at bringing down the Liberals, and indeed were surprised to have succeeded, so that they had no prepared programme to implement once in office²¹. They did have new personalities and attitudes: their strength was their enthusiasm and idealism. One minister recalled proudly that they "broke out of a kind of enervating cautiousness that congealed the previous government into inaction"²². Although the Diefenbaker ministers failed to transform Canada as they hoped, perhaps their greatest accomplishment was to transform Canadian politics and its agenda of discussion. They established the idea that a government should at least seem reformist, should be active, positive, with broad interests - big government legitimated by concern. More consciously than before they committed government to the "little man" - minorities, the underprivileged, Indians, farmers, small towns, the small businessman. For good and bad their government was a regional champion, with "policies that indicated the extremities of the country were important

too"²³: an admirable posture that caused them and Canada some difficulties. Both internally - with ideals of national development, the northern vision, and "unhyphenated Canadianism" - and externally - with a more burly international role, especially vis-a-vis the U.S.A. - nationalism was fostered. Yet there was a great contrast here: in each area the government's programmes were often less successful than it wished, were even unrealistic or unperceptive. Too often its idealism became self-righteous moralism. Yet even as a partial failure in its own terms, this was a politically momentous government²⁴.

It was the ideal of the "vision", vague, contradictory, uncomprehended even by many ministers²⁵, which encapsulated their highest hopes and their new purposes. Much of its origins were contained in a paper written by Merril Menzies in 1956, in which he accurately perceived that the Canadian people want more than "short-run economic stability and competent management,...They ask for vision in their statesmen, a sense of national purpose, and national destiny"²⁶. One closely concerned recalled feeling they were giving Canada its "New Deal", as if they had waited a lifetime and now had their chance²⁷. The "vision" - most clearly related to the "North" and "National Development", and most closely associated with Alvin Hamilton after Diefenbaker - was a recurring theme throughout. It came to approximate a "test" of ministers: believe or be cast out of

favour. Diefenbaker remembered that "the question of northern development became the issue that clearly separated the Conservative Party under my leadership, from the Liberals"²⁸. The idea had organizational effects, too. It contributed to a thrust towards comprehensive policies, towards "planning" (the word itself still disreputably associated with socialism), which meant that faced with a problem the call would go up for a "policy", not merely a programme or a solution. The vision also encouraged more collegial priority setting and an emphasis on coordinated policy-making by active consensus. Unfortunately, these trends were not supported by enough thought about organizational coordination.

The converse of the new visionary side to this government was their absorption by political details (though less by patronage: the Diefenbaker cabinet seems often to have abstained from these murky practices²⁹). Here too there was a great contrast, between their high political consciousness and their political failure. The government's accomplishments in altering the Canadian political agenda were largely due to the rooting of their high goals in politics, yet their ideals were compromised by frequently ill-considered and piece-meal responses to political troubles, nevertheless couched in visionary terms, which naturally undermined both ideals and programmes. A political obsession too often took the shape of political

errors³⁰. Some ministers could not adjust from being the opposition to being the government: the habits of partisan dueling above all, the anxiety of wanting so badly to keep their chance now they finally had it, the "massive amount of energy" many ministers remember being consumed by politically caring for the "terrible burden of that majority" of expectant M.P.s³¹. Internally, too, this pervasive political concern went too far - some ministers saw others as rivals for the favour of their chief, and an argument from short-term politics was often more attractive than more balanced considerations.

This brings out the fourth characteristic: that despite the more collegial emphasis this government was markedly individualist in its own way. There was a distinct contrast between collegial aspirations and individualist actions. This was partly a reaction by individualists such as Alvin Hamilton and Diefenbaker himself, impatient of collective restraints. Partly it was due to the numerous divisions amongst ministers. The ministry was centre-dominated but fragmented. All strings converged on the centre, all arguments went to the cabinet, but informality and individualism characterized ministerial relations. This was encouraged by the prime minister's own style, and by the lack of consistent procedures and conventions regulating ministerial conduct. As so often, failure reinforced failure and frustration bred irritation and division: the

fragmentation rapidly worsened toward the end and nearly toppled the prime minister.

The fifth characteristic was the most frustrating yet least specific problem of all - the recurring gap between the government's ideals and ideas, and its action and programmes; its "failure to translate ideas into programmes"³² (or do so soon enough). One close Diefenbaker adviser, Merril Menzies, felt the government "really achieved a lot", but "from the point of view of history, what is equally important and maybe more so, is the things that he tried to do and failed to achieve. They are, in most cases, the longer term policies"³³.

The government was undeniably unfortunate in events and personnel, but several general points can be made. First is that this gap was seen by participants themselves, several of whom were "continually harping"³⁴ on the need for a coherent bundle of long-range policies. Second is that the cabinet machinery was out of tune with overarching policy ideals, but that this cabinet was not able to change organization successfully. There were recurrent but unorganized and unsustained attempts to plan the implementation of policies geared to the ideals. Frequently "policies" came to mean only a grab-bag of disparate programmes; it seemed that the cabinet tried to discover policies rather than develop them³⁵. In this sense, as one minister put it, there was not enough "fundamental thinking

on where we should go as a government"³⁶. This was related to the third point, that the divisions among ministers, and their inexperience and enthusiasm, tended from the start to prevent such action and to encourage ministers to lose themselves in the details of policies just as some of them were enunciating high ideals. The fourth point followed: ideas were often spoken of or even announced as policies before any work had been done on formulating their elements, much less their details or practicality. Ministers "wanted some device between the public expression of things and the conception of them", especially since they had "not enough experience to know if the ideas would float"³⁷. And yet, fifth, exhaustive collective discussions supposed to counter this problem often ended by delaying and even preventing any action at all. Ministers appeared indecisive, and "never finished in time"³⁸. The coordinating machinery to make sense of all this, to link ideas and programmes, was not and perhaps could not be in place under this government. A somewhat bitter ex-minister said "nothing was ever normal during the Diefenbaker era...nothing was ever too systematic..."³⁹. Ministers' concerns and abilities were not organizational in character; they were demonstrating the need for structural reforms, but perhaps for that reason could not step back and contrive those reforms.

The sixth general characteristic takes us back to the "vision": that ideal propelled them, but it also dogged

them, and brought them down when they failed so signally to convey its realization. Its attractive strength and ultimate weakness was its vagueness. Even amongst ministers it sowed division and suspicion as a nearly theological test of faith. Publicly it was an unattainable ideal to which reality was always unfavourably compared. As Sevigny said of "the 'One Canada' theme", it "was an excellent idea but Diefenbaker failed to realize that the nation wanted more than just a slogan. Canadians wanted to know the ways and means to make the slogan come true. These ways and means were not forthcoming..."⁴⁰. No matter that people's expectations were perhaps "extravagantly unrealistic"⁴¹, or that ministers ran into unexpected financial limitations - they reaped what they had sowed. Yet they did not learn to limit and specify their ideals: right to the end the visionary aspiration led the government into committing itself to enormous policy initiatives previously unspecified and impossible to accomplish in time. In February 1963, for example, the cabinet felt it necessary to agree that "public statements by Ministers" on a grandiose national urban development plan announced by the prime minister in January, "should be expressed [only] in general terms"⁴². Moreover, the thrust to achieve the vision made government unnecessarily hard, as ministers repeatedly tried to fit too much, nearly everything, together into one "vision", trying in the process to attain an unreachable unity of policy, personnel

and organization. Especially unreachable for this ministry, with its internal differences, unwieldiness, organizational limits, and deficiencies as administrators. The height of their ideals was matched by sourness and bitterness in reaction to the spectre of defeat.

All these themes united in the cabinet's central organizational problem. It was increasingly felt that the inherited structure was becoming more and more outdated by the growing pressure of events and scope of government⁴³ - partly brought on by the Diefenbaker ministry itself. The cabinet structure was especially inconsistent with this ministry's ideas and behaviour, yet these ministers and prime minister were unable to cope. The inherited structure required just the qualities Prime Minister Diefenbaker hadn't - St. Laurent's business-like rationalism in a system built around his qualities; it suited just the kind of ministers Diefenbaker's weren't - experienced and united by habits of thought and pragmatism; it matched just the kind of government Diefenbaker's wasn't - unideological, developing policy "bottom-up" with an emphasis on individual responsibility; and changing the structure required organizationally conscious and experienced ministers - which Diefenbaker's weren't. A bottom-up policy-making apparatus was accepted, yet top-down ideas were superimposed - worse, both were done haphazardly. Government without systematic structure was the inevitable tendency, just as more

structure was imperative. The organizational problems were recognized to a degree, and some participants made sporadic efforts to remedy the situation⁴⁴, tossing around ideas of an inner cabinet, making particular cabinet committees more and more general, appointing the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization (but only nearly three years after considering such a commission⁴⁵) and appointing McCutcheon to the cabinet; but little was actually done and none of the ideas was taken far enough into practice. As one minister said, "we just kept going, grappling with the great issues, and had no time to reform structures"⁴⁶.

XII THE PRIME MINISTER

Naturally many of these characteristics of the government were set from the top, not shared equally throughout - indeed each of them applies especially to the prime minister. Diefenbaker shaped the government's character; it reflected his. He chose and allocated portfolios to the ministers; he was far and away the major factor in the government's political success and failure; he was the man of this government even more than most prime ministers, its central puzzle and controversy, a very subtle and contradictory man, difficult to understand, harder to explain.

An Un-Prime Ministerial Traditionalist

In some ways Diefenbaker was remarkably un-prime ministerial. He was not only inexperienced in government of any sort, but was notably ungovernmental in his past activities as a renowned defence lawyer and orator, as a maverick M.P. and crusader for righteous causes. It is no wonder that he retained an "Opposition leader" mentality even as prime minister. The Conservative party had been in the wilderness so many years, explained a Diefenbaker minister, that many in it - particularly Diefenbaker himself - had been "underdogs and champions of underdogs so long that when they became top dogs" they didn't know quite how

to act¹. Diefenbaker tended to keep attacking the remnant of his old enemies even when it was incongruous for the leader of such a huge majority to do so. One of those enemies suggested Diefenbaker's whole experience had been "an exploitation of opposition", that he was such a "merchant of words" he didn't know "how to start being constructive"² - a very different formulation of the same point (and one which shows how the Liberals underestimated him).

But whatever his experience, Diefenbaker was strongly traditionalist in his view of government and his own role in it. He was truly a conservative in his affection for the established governmental system and its principles. This was linked to his affection for Britain and his respect for its semi-parental role in relation to Canadian government. He took care, for example, when he was in London very soon after becoming prime minister, to "enquire about the procedures followed in the United Kingdom" in the transfer of governments³. He also made sure he knew about U.K. practice before making changes such as those to do with parliamentary secretaries⁴. He was a great parliamentarian, a "House of Commons man" throughout, and loved it before and beyond government.

He accepted the ministerial and cabinet structure as he found it (making only one change in the departmental structure in six years), and took his traditional prime

ministerial responsibilities seriously - perhaps too seriously. When shown the 1935 minute of council on prime ministerial prerogatives upon his assumption of office, he had it circulated to his colleagues, but he did not take the opportunity to bring it "up to date", as had been suggested in the attached memorandum from 1953⁵. He initiated few planned changes in the conduct of his office, though he rigorously maintained the traditional role of controller of cabinet machinery and other such prime ministerial customs as a "particular interest" in external affairs⁶. His position as chairman of the Cabinet Defence Committee was no mere formality even in respect of the mechanics of calling a meeting⁷. He seldom neglected the formal processes of decision-making, especially the decision-making function of the cabinet itself, and directed a stern rebuke when he felt ministers were shirking their responsibilities in cabinet⁸. He supported cabinet secrecy and reacted so strongly to betrayals of cabinet solidarity by leaks that he ended the circulation of cabinet conclusions (but not decisions) in 1959⁹. As a rule he did not interfere comprehensively in anyone's department (except perhaps External Affairs), and preferred to bring his views to bear at cabinet level except on more immediate political matters, of which he saw a great many¹⁰. That was part of his responsibility for the government as a whole; another side of this, however, was that in matters he thought were peculiarly his as prime minister, he

did not hesitate to act on his own. The Canadian Bill of Rights, a matter close to his heart for years, was largely his proposal and his doing. More controversially, at the height of the government's political difficulties with unemployment, when the cabinet was sorely divided, Diefenbaker held a series of meetings in the summer of 1960 with key economic officials brought together from across the government to attempt to get some agreement on strategy¹¹. However, it is significant that Diefenbaker didn't use his Prime Minister's Office as a counterweight to or substitute for ministers¹². On the other hand, perhaps he should have set up more organizational muscle to provide him with a continuing structure of political coordination. So, at least, felt some in his government¹³ - but that did not fit Diefenbaker's view of traditional cabinet government. It is not too much of a simplification to suggest that the cabinet suffered from his conscientiousness in limiting his formal activities by the traditional roles, while operating personally less traditionally and more disruptively.

A Divisive Personality

For despite his traditionalist view of government, and his stress on collective and cabinet responsibilities, Diefenbaker was very much a divisive rather than an integrating personality. More than anyone, more than the deep divisions amongst his ministers, he was responsible for

fragmenting the cabinet just as, paradoxically, he was insisting upon its unity.

Less than St. Laurent was Diefenbaker above cabinet squabbles, though there was no doubt he was a man apart. He apparently did not enter into the details of subjects too often, but he made it his job to see there was agreement - not just acceptance - of any matter that came to cabinet for decision¹⁴. Naturally ministers came to him on their own, because not only did that ease passage of their proposals through cabinet if he agreed, but seldom would he allow cabinet to reach a decision unless he had been persuaded¹⁵. Most important, unlike St. Laurent he took endless concern with the political aspects of proposals, inside and outside cabinet. It was clearly and always he who was cabinet's and the party's chief political manager as well as leader, to the extent that not only was the national director of the party organization, Alistair Grosart, his own choice but Grosart was kept so close to Diefenbaker that some ministers felt cut off from the national party organization¹⁶. On the other hand, Diefenbaker was so much a traditionalist, and felt so strongly about cabinet secrecy, that even Grosart was often not informed of cabinet's deliberations or even what they were discussing¹⁷. Diefenbaker personally entered fiercely into public political debate making himself - said one of his ministers -

cabinet's "lightning rod"¹⁸. One consequence of this was to thrust him into the focus of cabinet disputes.

Diefenbaker's was a divisive character partly because he was quintessentially an individualist himself. His political campaigns showed him at his best as the lone fighter, and he could not divest himself of his loner's characteristics. He seemed to see himself, with reason, not as "one of the boys", but as the "charismatic leader,...the source and centre of authority"¹⁹, upon whom the cabinet's political being depended. He was never easy to know, and though several men were obviously closer to him than the rest - his most loyal supporters over the longest time - one gains the impression that even they could never say they knew his mind.

From this arises a more important reason why Diefenbaker was a divisive leader: he thought in fundamentally personal terms, he "personalized everything", he made personal political relationships the essence of dealings with him²⁰. Loyalty to him - preferably long-proven, and judged according to who had supported or opposed him at the leadership conventions going back twenty years - was supposedly the key criterion. "With Dief", said one who collaborated closely with him, it was always "hard to separate out politics from personalities from policies"²¹. Moreover, because of these views he was constantly suspicious of his colleagues²², especially the

more recent ones. He himself was constantly political and very shrewd in his manoeuvrings, and assumed others were the same²³. Consequently he maintained an extensive informal political intelligence network of friends and acquaintances (some of those closest to him on political affairs were not in the cabinet), and did not hesitate to confront ministers with accusations based on their hints²⁴. Sevigny vividly recalled "strong, energetic, and very precise tongue-lashing"²⁵. This lack of trust and undercutting of ministers naturally alienated them, and to some extent created a self-fulfilling prophecy. Moreover, despite or because of this stress on personal loyalties he was not always a good judge of men's abilities. He had supposed "enemies" appointed, to keep them under his eye perhaps, then made them so. He mis-matched men's abilities to portfolios, and didn't make the best use of the reservoir of parliamentary talent at his disposal (his Quebec ministers in particular were weaker than they need have been). A prime minister should be close and cooperative with the Minister of Finance, but Fleming had been Diefenbaker's chief rival in 1956 and seemed consequently to be distrusted: this "formal and correct" rather than "close and warm" relationship²⁶, especially between two men whose economic outlooks were not in affinity, was a notable flaw in the cabinet. Diefenbaker would have done far better to change or demote mistrusted colleagues rather than undercut

and antagonize them. He was not a "good butcher", but he wielded too mean a knife.

A Strong Prime Minister

For Diefenbaker was a very strong prime minister even though he hesitated to be too autocratic just when and where it might have done the most good²⁷. Unlike St. Laurent's or Pearson's ministries, Diefenbaker's was always his, even when ministers were in revolt. Besides his personality, his political feats of 1957 and 1958 were awe-inspiring, and everyone knew they owed office to him; it is significant that the tide was turned against his cabinet opponents in 1963 when his supporters turned to the Conservative caucus, which upheld Diefenbaker mightily.

It was on this political basis that Diefenbaker "played up the role of the prime minister greatly"²⁸. When he had strong policy views, which was quite frequently, he seems to have made sure they prevailed, but not through any bureaucratic or organizational means. He kept a close eye on what was going on throughout his government. He kept the strings in his hands by making everything come through cabinet²⁹, with a thorough airing, where decisions were under his eyes and subject to his greatest influence. Ministers frequently settled the general thrust of their proposals with Diefenbaker, sometimes before cabinet saw them but often before cabinet approved them. As one of his

supporters put it, Diefenbaker "did not try to control his ministers", but influenced them and "made sure he knew and approved what was going on"³⁰. Consistent with his intuitive and politically-based but traditionally "proper" style, it seems Diefenbaker seldom pryed directly into a minister's policy sphere. Instead, he "watched...the political repercussion of any of our actions"³¹, and imposed his own priorities from time to time simply by politically, as leader of the party, "shooting off his mouth"³² before a policy had been settled or even before it had been discussed with anyone else. His proposal to shift 15% of Canadian trade to the U.K. was made as he stepped off an airplane, to all appearances without consultation with anyone³³.

He did not try to run everything - he was no autocrat in this sense and this was not a one-man government despite such accusations³⁴ - but he felt he was responsible for politics, he linked most issues to politics, and he made sure no one limited him in this regard. He felt, for example, that "The only person who can find [public opinion] out is the Prime Minister for there is a wide spectrum of communication with him"³⁵. He was consistently and deeply concerned with House of Commons matters, was "always one to worry about Opposition antics"³⁶, and "spent hours reading all that was published against him and his Government"³⁷. Fulton recalled that "when it came to a political decision, where anything had a political connotation in the broader

sense of the word, he seemed to reserve judgement there to himself alone"³⁸.

Unfortunately this style and personality meant that his strength, necessary in itself to any prime minister, was often the divisive strength of intimidation and overshadowing. All ministers were subject to his brow-beating style, to - as one loyal to him put it - his "technique of the tantrum", exercised "as a pro"³⁹. He kept "tuned in to the grass roots" through a wide network of correspondents and didn't hesitate to furiously "throw a letter at you" criticizing a minister⁴⁰. Not all ministers took it personally, but the weaker or lazier ministers retreated from such frightening responsibilities, keeping a low profile or even pushing their responsibilities on to the stronger ministers (such as Fulton, whose chairmanship of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation left him open to this)⁴¹. Even his loyalists, however, were somewhat intimidated by Diefenbaker and might prefer to send him papers rather than see him personally⁴².

All of this was no matter merely of petty grudges or spites, for it was part of a crucial deficiency in Diefenbaker's performance as prime minister. Diefenbaker dominated his ministers, he intimidated them, but more and more over the years this meant he failed in the important "ability to galvanize people into doing things better than ordinarily"⁴³. Diefenbaker's admirable qualities of courage

and fire - as Sevigny admitted - and idealism and charm (when he wished) could inspire tremendously deep loyalties, but over time his other characteristics alienated and divided most of his ministers, producing by the last couple of years "a deplorable lack of camaraderie"⁴⁴. It is significant that both a strong supporter and a long-time enemy of his used nearly the same words to say that Diefenbaker was not, in the best sense, a good disciplinarian despite his strength⁴⁵. He was still a loner, he was never the team leader the cabinet needed; in the last analysis he detracted from rather than contributed to cabinet cohesion.

An Intuitive Style

Perhaps the key to understanding Diefenbaker as prime minister is the assessment of his style, made by several close observers⁴⁶, as intuitive, based primarily on political instinct in contrast to St. Laurent's primarily rationalist position. "He was a real political animal"⁴⁷. "Government, in our view," as he said himself, "was as much a matter of inspiration as it was of administration"⁴⁸ - a refreshing and admirable attitude in many ways but with distinct dangers. In respect of structure, on balance his intuitive style served him ill.

Diefenbaker had no organizational plan when he entered office, "no feel for organization"⁴⁹, no experience

or training in it, no particular attitudes to organization or using the cabinet. "There was no really defined regime" in his prime minister's office, no clear assignment of jobs, recalled one of its heads: "I think that was in the nature of the man"⁵⁰. It had been suggested to him that he should set up a two-tier cabinet, but he did not want to worry about restructuring until the cabinet was built⁵¹. Not surprisingly, such restructuring never did come about. Most of the small-scale organizational reforms that took place were in response to political stimuli - the stopping of the circulation of cabinet minutes in the face of leaks, for example, or the empty investiture of Dorion as President of the Privy Council to meet criticisms of anti-French Canadian bias. With such an attitude, the possibilities in cabinet structure for systematic action were never exploited - schedules were "forever disrupted", "crises always arose"⁵².

More difficult to explain in such a strong man was Diefenbaker's apparent indecisiveness, which was his central public image by 1963⁵³. It seems to have been related to his emphasis on the politics of every situation, and to his reading of Canadian political history although it was certainly "more sophisticated than mere emulation"⁵⁴. As a "political animal", an inveterate manoeuvrer, it is said Diefenbaker was more comfortable with the "fluidity", and opportunity, of a decision postponed than with the "efficiency" - and rigidity - "of a decision taken"⁵⁵. It

was not simply, as sceptics had it, that for him "a decision made is a vote lost"⁵⁶, though such raw calculations played a part. In contrast to St. Laurent, who generally wanted decisions with business-like zeal, evidence suggests Diefenbaker felt King's success and Macdonald's as "Old Tomorrow" justified his own political wariness and caution, that political survival in Canada required not reaching decisions prematurely, before having studied all the political implications thoroughly, before all the facts were in and a consensus could be developed in favour of the policy he favoured⁵⁷. "Time is often the politician's best friend", he said⁵⁸. Partly for these reasons he cultivated his "terrific unofficial network"⁵⁹ of contacts to check his judgement, he postponed cabinet decisions until he was sure everyone agreed, he apparently used cabinet committees to delay and test until the "right" moment. These measures did not save him from political mistakes, which seemed merely to confirm his need for caution. Unfortunately, he had been elected with the image of a bold innovator - another contradiction which helped bring the government down.

Yet he was undeniably a great politician. He was a terrific campaigner, a shrewd judge of issues and political tactics, an intimidating parliamentary performer whose dominance of the House of Commons was seldom in question - nor was his love for it. But his political talents were one-sided - they were less suited to government

than opposition, or rather they were not balanced by other political talents needed in government. He was not a good judge of men's ministerial abilities; he was not good at the twin necessities of disciplining and inspiring a cabinet to work fruitfully. A supporter felt since he was "not the rational, logical man", but inspired by "intuition entirely", that "when the guys got him to think logically he buggered up"⁶⁰. There is much truth to this, since a great prime minister must have and act upon a sure sense of political intuition, but it must be a wider sense of politics matched to political abilities to work with others.

Diefenbaker was a marvellously inspirational politician as a campaigner because he so eloquently put forth attractively comprehensive plans or visions, for national development, northern expansion, urban development, and others. He saw both the political and the governmental necessity for comprehensive policy guided by ideals. "Now that I was Prime Minister I was not prepared to follow the course of my predecessors and allow a national need to be frustrated by cost-benefit bureaucratic studies"⁶¹. However, his statements of such policies were in timing and content often in reaction to a shorter-term political or electoral stimulus. There were many times, recalled a senior participant, when policies first emerged not as the culmination of a governmental process or even a planned act of timing, but in one of those wonderful speeches

Diefenbaker "treated...as works of art not of science"⁶². Prime ministerial speeches on matters as diverse as territorial waters and urban development apparently were surprises to the responsible ministers and relevant committees⁶³. The unsurprising results were that even praiseworthy programmes often were disappointing compared to their early ballyhoo, and that many proposals were so poorly thought-out that they were impossible to implement. So it was, for example, with the proposal to divert trade to the U.K., or with a proposal for a World Food Bank he made at a N.A.T.O. meeting: "I didn't go into details. I put this forward as an idea"⁶⁴. And it is not surprising the national development vision disappointed many in practice when a closely concerned minister is reliably supposed to have asked, ten days after the 1958 election, "what the hell's this national development policy?"⁶⁵

Diefenbaker seemingly didn't appreciate the importance and difficulty of the hard, long and precise executive slogging required to implement ideas and make the government work. "Prime Ministers deal with broader vistas"⁶⁶, he said; Fulton agreed he "had great concepts", but "was not strong on an actual programme by which they would be implemented"⁶⁷. Someone passing on a request of Diefenbaker's might have to suggest uncertainly that "you check with him just exactly what it is he has in mind"⁶⁸. Especially in the early years there was a lack of realization of the

limits to what any government could achieve, and that so much of the budget was committed funds⁶⁹. Again, this could mean valuable and refreshing breakthroughs - or it could mean unavailing and frustrating failures. Diefenbaker "didn't want to be bothered with the hard slugging needed to develop policy"⁷⁰. Prime Ministers often haven't the time, but Diefenbaker didn't appreciate the need. When he could get no unanimous and straightforward answer to unemployment from government economists he characteristically concluded that they "invariably have their parachutes ready"⁷¹. When promising ideas proved impractical or took longer than he expected, he too easily decided the explanation was internal or external sabotage by "them". Paul Martin gave Diefenbaker more credit than most of his Liberal opponents, "But in the sheer business of government, hard government, I don't think that he measured up. Of course this is a very difficult country to govern"⁷². Martin's is not an untypical conclusion.

This takes us back to that prominent and frustrating gap between promise and performance which characterized this government, and to their achievements. There were many concrete successes but they were still few and small-scale compared to the promises. It is remarkable that when a thoughtful Diefenbaker minister was asked to point out the great successes of the government, he spoke of policies which "changed the whole concept" of social security for the

elderly, which "indicated the extremities of the country were important too" and demonstrated a "greater feeling..that the entire future of the country was not necessarily synonymous with a few large megalopolises", which showed "we had to plan, had to have some rational plan for national development". He added, "these began to be expressed in particular programmes"⁷³. Diefenbaker knew the importance of words, that they can have a concrete impact and are not just illusion, but he had difficulty translating them successfully into government action. His cabinet's greatest impact was to change the future not primarily by programme achievements, but by changing Canada's political agenda. To St. Laurent's "action not words" Diefenbaker replied in the most profound political sense, "words not action". This style was central to the structure of his cabinet.

XIII THE CABINET

The operation of the cabinet exemplifies the lesser importance of formal structural outlines: the arrangements inherited from St. Laurent were retained almost unchanged, so that relatively little time need be spent detailing cabinet procedures, and yet the real operation of the cabinet was very different.

The procedures document circulated shortly before St. Laurent's defeat, dated 13 March 1957, was never revised even though by 1963 "some changes have been introduced in the intervening years"¹. Even before Diefenbaker returned from the Commonwealth Conference to which he departed immediately upon assuming office, the St. Laurent agenda procedures were re-introduced in some apparent desperation for the usual reasons of "expediting cabinet business and saving everyone's time"². When the prime minister did return, "the incoming government decided to follow the established procedures which were largely patterned after U.K. practice"³, as Diefenbaker had satisfied himself. Similarly, in July 1957 the cabinet agreed to adopt the 1952 St. Laurent directive on the procedures for the preparation and consideration of legislative proposals through the Cabinet Committee on Legislation, with the proviso "that it might later be modified in some respects in the light of experience"⁴ - but it was not.

The essentials of this cabinet organization were outlined by the Cabinet Secretary for Diefenbaker, at his request, even before the actual transfer of power⁵. Cabinet meetings were normally held on Thursdays "but at other times when necessary". The prime minister conducted meetings as he wished but, it was suggested, "it is not usual for the Prime Minister to take too active a part in the discussion at the beginning of each item", although often he "will need to intervene at some stage", recognizing that the "essential problem, of course, is to get decisions that all will be prepared to support". "In order to save time at the meetings and give all Ministers a necessary minimum of information and background, an agenda is normally circulated the day before the meeting and attached to it are memoranda from the Ministers responsible for the various items", although difficulties were experienced in practice. Despite the agenda system, the prime minister would likely "provide an opportunity at some point in the meeting for Ministers to raise matters that are not on the agenda". Brief (and "highly secret") conclusions were produced "of a few paragraphs on each item" summarizing the proposal, the argument (without attribution), and the decision reached, and were circulated to ministers as soon as possible, as was the record of decision "in a form that can be put on departmental files". According to the discussion, the prime minister judges "how far it is desirable in any particular

case to sum up or make clear the decision in cases of doubt", though "what opinion is taken by the Prime Minister to have prevailed", whether left unclear or not, prevails in the conclusions. These were the arrangements Diefenbaker found in place in 1957, and he made them traditional by accepting them.

Of course, changes were necessary in detail, but they were piecemeal, unplanned, and frequently tacit. Despite promptings "on several occasions" from the most procedurally-minded of the P.C.O. officers, a revised procedures document was never circulated⁶. A few revealing changes of form were made, in particular the addition of a second weekly cabinet on Tuesday as early as March 1958⁷, and the suspension of the circulation of cabinet conclusions in January 1959⁸. Another more or less typical development was the public announcement that Dorion as President of the Privy Council, "an ancient and most important position", would preside at cabinet in the prime minister's absence, followed in practice, it seems, by only a very few such instances⁹.

Before outlining cabinet practice, two descriptive points reflect the essence of the Diefenbaker cabinet's habits. First, and most striking, is the increase in the number of cabinet meetings¹⁰ - roughly 150 per year on average, about 2/3 more than the average of St. Laurent's last five years in office, with a high of over 160 in 1959.

Second, time after time items not only carried over from agenda to agenda (much more often than two or three meetings in a row), but even reappeared more than once after intervals of weeks or even - as the years passed - months¹¹. These facts underly much of what is to come.

Too Much with Too Little

It is a central theme that the Diefenbaker cabinet was made to try to do much with too little - too many issues in too much detail, treated with too much discussion and too little decisiveness, accompanied, exacerbated, and contributed to by too little organization and too much informality. Partly this was due to the initial inexperience of the ministers; to their inheritance of knotty issues like the Arrow and the Columbia River treaty discussions; to the growth in the scope and complexity of government operations; and to the cabinet's higher ambitions. "From 1957 to 1960-1, there wasn't enough room on the agenda of each session for all the things we were fighting for"¹². But there are also important structural explanations.

Nearly everything came to cabinet. The number of cabinet documents doubled compared to the St. Laurent years¹³. There were particularly "interminable" meetings on economic matters¹⁴. Matters which under St. Laurent were prepared and discussed in cabinet committees were considered to be cabinet-level issues under Diefenbaker; apparently,

for example, the 1961 Federal-Provincial Conference was prepared for in this way¹⁵. In effect, there tended to be a reversion to some of the practices under King and Bennett, when cabinet met frequently and carried on "all sorts of discussion", but now in a world where government had "a whole lot more business"¹⁶. The cabinet was used as a forum where policy was not only decided but even evolved. Although occasional important matters, especially in external affairs (such as the 1962 Cuban crisis)¹⁷, occupied relatively little cabinet time, most issues were more than exhaustively discussed. Harkness recalled Diefenbaker "would frequently have a series of meetings ... at some periods, when matters of considerable importance were up for discussion and decision, we would have two cabinet meetings a day almost continuously for a week or more"¹⁸. A document discussing cabinet committees suggests most cabinet time could be saved in the relatively detailed areas of financing and credit, provincial relations and grants, trade and agricultural questions ("practically inseparable nowadays"), and commutation cases¹⁹.

Much of this was due to Diefenbaker's conceptions of the role of cabinet and of the way he as chairman should conduct it. Some of the difficulty, however, was due to his personal political style. It was believed in the P.C.O. that "Diefenbaker used cabinet itself more" than any other postwar prime minister²⁰. Some issues were handled in

cabinet because, as with old age pensions, of his "own considerable concern in it"²¹. He also used cabinet to keep an eye on everyone ("He liked to have ministers around him at so many meetings"²²), and because with his experience and abilities "he personally loved the argument"²³ and liked to have it go on in front of him. "Cabinet meetings were command performances"²⁴. Moreover, he was very conscientious about cabinet making the right decisions. The most vivid example was his insistence on thorough discussions at length of every question of commutation of a death sentence - "a great drain on the time and nervous energy of ministers", taking up "hours and hours a week sometimes"²⁵.

This over-use of the cabinet undermined any use of it. Because so many problems came to cabinet, it was impossible to know in advance how much discussion and controversy there would be on each issue²⁶, and very difficult therefore to organize or manage the cabinet efficiently. The problems of cabinet organization that St. Laurent's people had tried to remedy, and had in fact limited, worsened; irregularity, inconsistency, unpredictability, unpreparedness and improvisation seem to have marked cabinet organization. Many decisions were taken in an orderly way, of course, but the order varied.

Informality was the keynote: "it was a favourite teatime topic", a minister said²⁷. Explanatory memoranda

proposing legislation might be directed to the Cabinet Committee on Legislation, a Cabinet Committee on the Sessional Programme if there was one, or to the cabinet²⁸, depending on circumstances. The procedures document dating from the St. Laurent years was not only never revised, but may never actually have been formally circulated²⁹. There was "little consistency in the manner in which Memoranda to Cabinet are prepared by the various departments and agencies"³⁰, and "Many... are too long, detailed and too disorganized to be really suitable as policy papers. This may be one reason why Ministers may sometimes be not fully prepared for the discussions"³¹. Another, surely, was the tardiness and uncertainty of cabinet agenda under these conditions. In one case it was noted that "This agenda was run off... 5 minutes before the meeting"³². The convention under St. Laurent of allowing some time for ministers to bring up urgent unscheduled business seems to have been inordinately expanded: at one meeting 21 items were discussed although the agenda listed only 8 - item #1 on the agenda was discussed only seventh, and the final two agenda items were apparently not discussed at all³³. Cabinet meetings could be on very short notice, routinely called in the morning for the afternoon³⁴, so that other meetings could only be tentatively arranged "barring the possibility of a meeting of the Cabinet on that date"³⁵. One relatively formal record says cabinet "may meet from two to five days a

week"³⁶. Meetings were not only numerous and irregular, they also lasted longer than before³⁷. They could be so informal as to exclude even the secretary, meeting "without benefit of clergy"³⁸ - these meetings were not counted formally so that the total number is even higher than it seems. Particular items dragged on meeting after meeting and referrals and deferrals gradually increased³⁹. Ministers didn't all enjoy this state of affairs, many feeling it kept them too much from other duties⁴⁰. Discussions of remedies were not unusual, but such attempts as were made were usually themselves piecemeal and informal. The rock upon which they really struck was Diefenbaker's conduct of the cabinet and the role in which he and, at least tacitly, his ministers saw cabinet.

Cabinet as a 'Parliament'

The Diefenbaker cabinet took on some "parliamentary" characteristics. Certainly the experience and even affinities of many of the ministers led them in this direction. Their cabinet was very oral in character. Diefenbaker himself loved the atmosphere of debate and made sure that once an issue came to cabinet, it would be thoroughly discussed no matter what his own convictions⁴¹. Ministers were "used to bull sessions in the shadow cabinet and used the cabinet as such"⁴². Even committee reports were only to be "written if time permits, otherwise oral";

frequently they were oral⁴³. All views were to be heard and argued out in front of, or with, an audience. This emphasized rhetoric, so that administrative ability and the quiet thoughtfulness of ministers such as Angus MacLean tended to be underestimated. An unexpected consequence was that some of the French-Canadian ministers were "handicapped" and seldom had an impact in cabinet commensurate with their importance⁴⁴.

The cabinet was also very partisan political in character. St. Laurent, it will be recalled, liked to have political details thrashed out before cabinet if at all possible, but under Diefenbaker the political side of every current issue was discussed in the cabinet, too often to the detriment of decisive executive accomplishments⁴⁵. Diefenbaker is supposed to have declared at one session that "If there are any statesmen here they'd better resign. I want politicians"⁴⁶. Politicians' "bull sessions" naturally take on this character, and they are positively necessary, but the cabinet may not always be the best forum for them. These ministers were only recently in government after long, less disciplined opposition years, and their party leadership had been in off-and-on hot dispute for some twenty years, involving many of them in factional suspicions and policy disagreements only just healed over by victory. It was not surprising that much more collective care was taken in compiling the speech from the throne⁴⁷ than under St.

Laurent. There were special "political cabinets"⁴⁸, to use more recent terminology, in addition to regular cabinet meetings. Though at regular cabinets the "Parliamentary programme" was a frequently recurring item⁴⁹, nearer elections - as in January 1958 - it seemed to one official that "almost every second conclusion... had some item in it about parliamentary procedure and tactics"⁵⁰.

As chairman, too, Diefenbaker seemed to be caught by this parliamentary tone of the cabinet. His own inclinations towards and reasons for thorough caution were reinforced by a tendency to interpret his chairman's role in some respects like that of Speaker of the House. It seemingly "took forever to get something decided" partly because Diefenbaker simply "had more patience than was thought justified" by more than one minister⁵¹. Sevigny stated that "had the Diefenbaker Cabinet made as many decisions as it held discussions, there would have been very little left for our successors to do"⁵².

However, the "slowness of decision characteristic of the Diefenbaker regime"⁵³ was more complex than a mere reflection of prime ministerial indecisiveness.

The Dominance of Collective Decision-Taking

A collegial conception of the cabinet's role was at the heart of its structure. Diefenbaker's firmly traditionalist view of cabinet combined with his strong

political inclinations and his cabinet's experience and personalities tended in respect of cabinet operations, to make collective decision-taking much more important than under St. Laurent.

This was so in two important ways. First, the insistence upon consensus as the basic principle of cabinet decision-taking was taken too literally and too far. The implications of cabinet solidarity for collective decision-taking (that decisions must be accepted by all) were elevated into an active principle of conduct. Its strength was reflected by the emphasis put upon its external face - collective responsibility and cabinet secrecy - by Diefenbaker, who was infuriated by his cabinet's leakiness. His belief in solidarity and consensus was a reason he occasionally allowed himself to be persuaded against his political instincts, particularly when he could not exercise his usual tactics because of pressing time limits. He was seldom neutral in cabinet discussions even when he was not an active participant, and occasionally - particularly on moral issues such as (it seems) the position of South Africa in the Commonwealth - his leadership of a passionate but small minority carried against a moderately opposed majority⁵⁴. Yet although there was never any doubt Diefenbaker was the final authority on the content of decisions taken and he certainly opposed taking votes, nevertheless he often refused to register a decision unless

there was a clear consensus, and preferably unanimity. Hees recalled that "He didn't want to be the person who said, I have listened to everything. This is what we are going to do. So we had to wait until we came to a clear consensus, and we would argue and argue... Everybody... would have been very glad to stop arguing and go along... We felt that we had to keep on going, and we just argued ourselves into exhaustion"⁵⁵. One sympathetic observer felt Diefenbaker saw cabinet as a jury, and his technique in court had been to work on each juror "until he saw he had him"⁵⁶. He invited participation by everyone, he sometimes even called for the opinions of each minister around the table so he would know where each stood⁵⁷, continuing the discussion until he could see a clear consensus no matter how long it took. If there was dissent "he would defer and defer and defer", or create an ad-hoc committee more often as time went by, but he rarely closed discussion until he had agreement "even to what he knew he wanted"⁵⁸. He "went back until he got it" said one minister⁵⁹. It seemed little was settled unless it was held over at least once, and often three or four times. One consequence of this, particularly irritating to some ministers and cumulatively divisive, was that stubbornly conscientious ministers like Fleming could hold up cabinet action endlessly. One minister felt that "we could have reached decisions much more expeditiously" with a different Minister of Finance⁶⁰.

Second, this emphasis on collective decision-taking went even further towards truly collegial decision-taking: cabinet was really supposed to enter very deeply into decision-making not merely decision-taking, into formulating policies as well as reaching consensus upon them. That was why so many issues large and small were brought to cabinet, why so much time was spent on so many of them, why making decisions took so long so often. Diefenbaker attempted to realize the traditional role of cabinet when it could no longer really be done; his "style was to do more work in the whole"⁶¹. Diefenbaker was very conscientious about every minister concerned with an issue making his case in cabinet; he would insist everyone contribute to a discussion even if they had little or nothing to say⁶². It happened that "Ministers often get on to discussing alternative ways of doing what the departments want to do"⁶³. One minister recalled "we spent too much valuable time on fairly small details, getting locked into arguments on insignificant things"⁶⁴.

Conclusions

The Cabinet's position was formally the same as under St. Laurent but vastly different in practice. The chief consequence of its structure was strength without decisiveness. Everything of any importance had to be decided by cabinet, yet its organization could not prevent and its

conduct encouraged delay, uncertainty and indecision - even when its members were not themselves personally and individually perplexed or irresolute. The cabinet did not decide quickly, and ministers were kept from making their own swift decisions on matters which were considered departmental policy under St. Laurent⁶⁵. In 1960 cabinet was reduced to deciding that its delegation to the federal-provincial conference "would submit no firm proposals to the Conference but attempt to draw out from the provinces their views and proposals", because the Government was in no position to put forward a proposal or firm views on the substance of federal-provincial financial arrangements⁶⁶.

The need to reorganize cabinet's structure became more and more urgent, to allow and encourage both the cabinet to do the most important things for which it was best suited, and the other parts of government - committees, ministers, the civil service - to do their best work. This need was seen by Diefenbaker and his cabinet⁶⁷. It was probably one reason why they reformed the system of parliamentary secretaries in 1959; why royal commissions were set up on as diverse subjects as coal, Canadian periodicals, and railways; why the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization was set up in 1960; why consideration of the idea of a two-tier cabinet was revived both within the P.C.O.⁶⁸ and in ministerial coffee-klatches⁶⁹; why consideration was given to the question raised by Diefenbaker in

cabinet in early 1960 of "more effective procedures for the despatch of Cabinet business and in particular the use of committees to lighten the load of the Cabinet as a whole"⁷⁰. But little came of all these - efforts were too little, too late, too fitfully made, too contradictory, and in the end overtaken by events. Ministers expected that a great effort at structural reform would have been made after the 1962 election⁷¹, but its results made that impossible.

XIV MINISTERIAL RELATIONS

Yet structural reform made without thought of its context of ministerial relations would likely not have been successful. Ministerial relations under Diefenbaker were much less structured by custom than under St. Laurent, but they had their own underlying principles. Ministerial relations were very much a central and not a residual factor in the operating structure of the Diefenbaker government. The importance of individual persons and personalities was particularly evident. It was not merely that, for example, the character and importance of the Ministry of Northern Affairs and National Resources changed drastically with Alvin Hamilton's move to Agriculture in 1960¹, or even that the move marked the effective end of the Cabinet Committee on National Development²: such dependence on individuals had been part of previous governments and would be again. It is clear that overall, as one close to the situation said, "under Diefenbaker personal political relationships were more important"³ than before. While the bilateral prime minister-ministers relationship may have "reached its peak under St. Laurent", its very different character under Diefenbaker meant that a strong case could be made that "in a sense his running of the cabinet and his relations with ministers was Diefenbaker's downfall"⁴.

But it must be remembered that the fragmentation of the cabinet which was the most vivid evidence of the government's decline and the most spectacular aspect of its collapse, did not appear at once in 1957. The fragmented character of ministerial relations developed gradually⁵. At first, and for some time, ministers simply "came together so frequently" that there was a real "camaraderie and interpersonal sensitivity", as one said⁶. Yet this very fact meant that the clashes and suspicions which occurred grew all the more bitter. The government began with enthusiasm and general goodwill but ended in suspicion and dispute, a point which must not be forgotten in less chronological considerations. However, although the consequences took some time to become clear, throughout these years the most striking characteristic of ministerial relations was the numerous latent and then manifest conflicts. Even in the first couple of years one official recalls this as "a very individualist government", and a prominent minister felt they were "all individuals"⁷.

Lines of Fracture

The key to understanding ministerial relations then was not a few particular customs but the multiple lines of fracture dividing ministers, fractures which were deeper, wider and more numerous than in most other Canadian cabinets. It must be remembered that the Diefenbaker

cabinet was the first Conservative cabinet since 1935, and that in the intervening years the party had become much more divided and fractious than its opponents. The duties and delights of office were a force for unity, but evidently not enough of one. The fractures persisted beyond obvious portfolio differences, and can be summarized under five headings.

First, ministers were divided by personal loyalties. Diefenbaker's stress on personal loyalty has already been noted. He had "a few buddies" such as David Walker; a few "favoured children" such as Alvin Hamilton; and a few other more or less trusted colleagues such as Gordon Churchill and Howard Green.⁸ Even they were tested, but as for the rest of the cabinet, the tone of Diefenbaker's own memoirs⁹ support at least one of the contentions in the critical book Diefenbaker seemed most concerned to refute¹⁰ - that the cabinet appeared to be divided into the "Forty-Twoers", the "Forty-Eighters" and the "Fifty-Sixers", according to when they had first supported Diefenbaker's leadership bids, and "The Others" who had consistently opposed him and seemed to him to be associated with the Tory party's "Eastern" business establishment. Such apparent divisions naturally generated conflicts and jealousies among ministers. In terms of policy too, Diefenbaker - for example - "gave Alvin Hamilton a political dynamism which made checking him a lost cause

almost"¹¹, or so it could seem to those who resented his favoured status. A shared loyalty to "the Chief" was dissipated before many years passed¹².

Second, ministers were divided by their whole approach to government. There was a division of ideological tendencies which focused on a series of issues, especially on policies to fight unemployment¹³. Moreover, the division was complicated and intensified by the public dispute over economic policy with James Coyne of the Bank of Canada. On the one hand were the "expansionists", men such as Starr or Alvin Hamilton, the opposition to whom can be summed up by the quoted remark that "Alvin can't add"¹⁴. On the other hand were the fiscal conservatives, embodied above all in Donald Fleming whose role as Minister of Finance both reinforced his attitudes and made them crucial to the government. His painstakingly earnest and conscientiously repeated views made him a divisive force despite himself. He was cast as "a sort of national miser"¹⁵, loath to spend no matter how justified it was. This became an extremely serious conflict, so that a 1960 document seemed prophetic: "It seems... that Mr. Fleming's general approach to this Dominion-Provincial Fiscal problem now is inconsistent in objective and spirit with the general approach [Ministers] are making to the whole economic and national development programme, and I worry that the disparity will quickly become evident and will not only cause... political trouble

but may well interfere with the success of [the] economic programme"¹⁶. Diefenbaker generally supported the expansionists against the Minister of Finance and it seemed that eventually the expansionists began to win out, yet Diefenbaker wanted a consensus he could not get without transferring Fleming. He did not do so until 1962, a perhaps fatal delay.

The third division was on the basis of personal styles. It gained importance by the extremity of the differences and by its attachment to other divisions - particularly toward the end. There were contrasts between the boyish flamboyance of Hees and the quiet thoughtfulness of MacLean, between the aggressiveness of Walker and the intellectual elegance of Fulton, between the weakness of some and the strength of others, between the political emphasis of many and the administrative reflection of civil service attitudes by a few, between Diefenbaker and nearly everyone at one time or another. But, again, the style of Fleming, in his central portfolio, became a crucially divisive factor. Fleming's conscientiousness and respect for his top officials (who returned it wholeheartedly) seemingly made him feel it "his duty to reflect the views of his officials on almost every matter", fighting "whether he had any chance of prevailing or not", pushing minor disputes to cabinet by his honest unwillingness to make a compromise deal¹⁷. Frequently exasperated colleagues came to picture

him as "officious and pompous", as seeing "his department as important as all the others put together". Certainly they were correct in believing "he made decision-making more tortuous" than it need have been¹⁸.

A fourth division was on the basis of personal background. It seems a small point, but gained by the lack of counter-balancing government experience. Ministers clearly recall two problems in particular. The first was that quite a number of the cabinet were war veterans, and many of them (especially the senior officers) fancied themselves as experts on defence: at first this caused some amusement among the rest, but they were increasingly exasperated by "horrible long arguments, first in Cabinet Defence Committee, then in cabinet"¹⁹. The second was more enervating because more wide-spread: it was the running fight between "the legalistic approach to problems" of many of the lawyers and some others in the cabinet; and the sometimes impractical and careless approach of some of the politically-minded who grew "tired of being shot down by lawyers", and weary of the long delays caused by too-detailed examinations of documents and even draft legislation²⁰.

The Regional Representative Role

The fifth division, perhaps most important of all, was along regional lines. The regional representative role

in a Canadian cabinet is always worth special consideration, but never more than in a ministry as politically and regionally conscious as Diefenbaker's. In this cabinet it was a major pole for both good and bad, constructive and destructive influences. The splits were not just the common ones: they were structured and high-lighted by the not unjustified belief that "Bay Street [the Toronto business community] had ignored the Prairies and the North" and the Atlantic provinces, and that the government had "a mandate to adjust this balance"²¹. The ministers from central Canada naturally resisted this belief. Moreover, at a crucial time this outlook contributed to a misunderstanding and neglect of Quebec's new aspirations: they were "practically ignored", or so Quebecers felt²².

The first aspect of the operation of the regional role is cabinet balance. It remained "a complicated and difficult problem" of cabinet-making, with the same considerations of region, province and area as well as language and religion, as under St. Laurent²³. The balance, however, did shift significantly, helped by the expansion of the cabinet to twenty-three. Each of the Atlantic provinces had a representative minister, giving them four (until Newfoundland lost its minister in 1962) compared to three under St. Laurent. Each of the Prairie provinces had at least one minister - in fact Saskatchewan had two and Manitoba gained a second in 1960. British Columbia retained

its second minister, and until 1960 had a third. Ontario held its seven ministers and gained one later - significantly, it had only six ministers for eighteen months and gained its eighth only after the 1962 election. Quebec was given only two ministers of seventeen in the provisional cabinet of 1957, had five in 1958, and six from time to time until 1963 (compared to six under St. Laurent). The clear gainers were the Prairies and the Atlantic provinces to a lesser degree, and the relative losers were Ontario and Quebec. Linguistically, even after the 1958 sweep only four francophones were appointed, which was seen as an insult (17% of the Cabinet compared to 25% under St. Laurent); there were five in the latter half of 1959 and from the October 1960 shuffle until the 1962 election; only in March 1963 was the number raised to six (26%) by two last-minute additions. There was also a higher turnover of Quebec and francophone ministers. Moreover, it was obvious that francophones were appointed to less important portfolios, despite the trumpeted but empty appointment of Dorion as President of the Privy Council and the tardy elevation of Balcer to Transport in 1960. The obvious political conclusions were made by Quebec in 1963²⁴.

The operation of the structure of regional representatives was broadly similar to St. Laurent's, but with differences typical of Diefenbaker's cabinet. In general, the regional role of ministers was emphasized in

line with the overall tactical political emphasis. The regional roles were not formal governmental roles - Diefenbaker opposed the tendency occasionally shown to establish ministerial offices outside Ottawa²⁵. However, although there was naturally "quite a bit of informal consultation on regional considerations"²⁶, very much of this sort of discussion seems to have taken place in the cabinet under the eyes of Diefenbaker and all his colleagues. The regional representative roles apparently were not as clearly defined by area and seniority as under St. Laurent, although - for example - Sevigny was "the French-speaking representative in the federal cabinet for the Montreal area"²⁷. One minister remembers "fifteen or sixteen" regions. Regional fiefdoms were not evident - there was no undoubted top lieutenant for Ontario or Quebec at all, or from British Columbia, although Diefenbaker himself was from the Prairies and Nowlan was the strongest Maritimes minister²⁸.

Nevertheless, the regional strengths and duties of ministers were substantial, particularly but not only in the cases of personally strong ministers²⁹. The able ministers from British Columbia felt strongly they should have special weight in their areas, and they did, but even the relatively inarticulate and less able Quebec ministers had to be listened to because they were needed. The problem was they were often not in touch with the currents of power in their

province themselves, and were not replaced by ministers who were. It was recognized that ministers should deal with the particular problems of their provinces, and as a result they had to have wide political interests. They might, for example, be considered "the regional representatives of the various coal-mining industries"³⁰, or be asked to "obtain nominations from their respective regions"³¹ for the National Conference on Canada's Centennial, and it could be that "broadcasting licences would be cleared with the ministers directly concerned in respect of the area before approval by cabinet"³². Certainly a minister's regional role could affect his portfolio, frequently in this cabinet reinforcing it (or vice versa) as in the cases of Alvin Hamilton or Angus MacLean. Occasionally all ministers from a region might be specifically asked to report informally as a group³³.

Indeed, so important was this role both in political practice and in relation to the government's goals, that it came to divide ministers deeply. For some it symbolized or even embodied all the other divisions. Even into the 1970's there were references to western "Diefenbaker cowboys". One minister "reluctantly concluded that ministers from the Central-St. Lawrence Valley area always truly represented the views of their constituents, subconsciously believing that what is good for them is good for the whole country"³⁴. Alvin Hamilton concluded when his

last attempt to reformulate the vision was defeated that "One Toronto guy is dangerous, but two of them are suicide"³⁵. The new emphasis on the "periphery", on a desire to redress the traditional bias of Confederation, was a motive force behind much that was constructive, but the suspicions and jealousies encouraged by such a competitive outlook greatly hampered the cabinet. Again, good intentions poorly followed through made for undesirable results.

The effects of all these divisions were pervasive and underlie the whole of this study. They were magnified by mismatched abilities, styles and portfolios. One participant recalls not only the "odd mixtures of personalities", but the "wrong people"³⁶ for various ministries: perhaps the government would have lasted longer with a Secretary of State for External Affairs who did not share "Green's pangs of (nuclear) conscience"³⁷, or a Minister of Finance who was more flexible and congenial. It came to be that "nobody was in tandem"³⁸ - an agonized recollection. The divisions meant not so much that small groups were running the cabinet or fighting each other, but that individuals were all divided from each other in one way or another, though united from time to time on particular issues. The effectiveness of ministers in their own jobs was reduced as well as that of cabinet as a whole. There was a fatal isolation of the Minister of Finance from his colleagues, even the prime

minister. The Treasury Board was seen by some not only as an ogre of frugality - that is normal, and was supported by Diefenbaker - but as an insidious interference in policy, "turning priorities around" as one minister declared³⁹. It became harder and harder to settle anything in particular, and especially the larger questions. Decision-making was "tortuous", even favoured ministries were "frustrated"⁴⁰. It was not untypical that on a broad issue with financial and regional implications "a wide divergence exists between the views of ministers in the cabinet committee and perhaps an even wider diversity will be apparent when the cabinet itself gets down to discussion of the matter"⁴¹. The divisions reinforced each other's fragmenting effect, bred by irritation and disillusionment, until by the end they were beginning to coincide more and more. No active cabals took shape until after the 1962 election, however, when the divisions finally solidified and culminated in revolt not only by the non-western, Conservative establishment but also on the basis of opposition to Diefenbaker's leadership.

The Instability of Ministerial Relations

The divisions also contributed to a cumulative instability of ministerial relations. Other factors contributed to the same result. It is important that there was no recognized hierarchy of ministers, formal or informal, though of course some ministers were stronger than others.

Diefenbaker was serious when he stated his belief that "There are no senior or junior portfolios. All of them are equally important"⁴² - or should be. The "suggestion that one is senior and the other junior in the relations of a prime minister and the members of his cabinet is the last thing I would want to develop"⁴³. There was no obvious basis of seniority of service. Regional roles were not strictly enough organized for this purpose. The distinction between line and coordinating portfolios was blurred, so that a line minister such as Alvin Hamilton ranged across boundaries while the coordinating functions of the Minister of Finance (tactlessly exercised, perhaps) were resented. Only the prime minister's overall coordinating role was unchallenged. Diefenbaker's own habits and methods tended to undermine the occupants of senior portfolios, yet his personal relations with ministers provided no stable "inner cabinet" structure. And Diefenbaker - ironically enough - decided against an inner cabinet of another sort, an "Executive Committee", because he apparently felt it would engender too many jealousies amongst ministers (even though some ministers were pressing for such a committee)⁴⁴.

Certainly there was a strength in this fluidity, in its leeway for initiative and invention, but it became a vital weakness. Ministers want and need some certainty of position and responsibilities. Over time the situation fostered a withdrawal into individual responsibilities,

distrust, rivalries, and a lack of shared purpose. The cabinet became unstable partly because it had too many but too uncertain axes of ministerial relationships.

There was, too, the great importance given tactical political considerations. It was shown by the importance of the regional roles, which a minister suggested might be more important on a day-to-day basis than a minister's portfolio⁴⁵. This was again a strength in some ways but it tended to fragment any overall approach to policy because it was taken too far. Moreover, this tactical emphasis extended to the attitudes of ministers toward each other - Diefenbaker's expectation of political manoeuvring perhaps encouraged it, and some ministers nearly from the start gave the impression of jockeying to become "crown prince" and heir to the new Conservative era that at first seemed dawning⁴⁶.

The formal cabinet structures required a greater emphasis on informal links and settlements among ministers, not undercover or illegitimate but as a real and structured aspect of ministerial relations based on individual responsibilities. But Diefenbaker strongly discouraged any such thing. He gave the impression he saw such activities as intrigues and disliked any pre-concerting of positions among ministers, especially without his knowledge⁴⁷. This contrast of necessities and attitudes put great stress on the machinery and on ministers, and made the reconciliation

of individual responsibilities and collective decision-taking very difficult.

The sort of broad individual responsibilities exercised in relative harmony upon which so much of the St. Laurent cabinet structure depended had become unworkable. There were, of course, consultations among ministers throughout the Diefenbaker years, because they were necessary and even encouraged from time to time. The P.C.O. thought they were valuable⁴⁸; ministers consulted the prime minister about their important proposals before cabinet; memoranda were supposed to refer to consultation with interested departments - and quite a few did⁴⁹; and as under St. Laurent the Ministers of External Affairs and Defence and to a degree Trade and Commerce did submit joint memoranda quite often⁵⁰. In practice, however, these consultations were too informal, never really enjoined upon ministers, and often only on obviously political implications. They were not effective and efficient even when they were numerous because they were irregular and cursory. Meetings often took place only when a matter was urgent and might not take place for just that reason, or casually if an opportunity offered at the close of cabinet or "when having coffee" - the meeting was happenstance not structure⁵¹. Frequently their issues were reopened in cabinet, with considerable differences among ministers⁵². Many meetings only took place after cabinet discussion had been

inconclusive rather than avoiding just that⁵³. Consultations were up to the individual entirely, not systematic even in intent, so that it was "not unusual" with at least five or six ministers to take a subject to cabinet "without any consultation at all"; "most ministers ran with their own ball" and were "not consistently informed" by their colleagues⁵⁴.

It was not merely that consultations were not structured. There was not as time went on the necessary general trust which must underlie any system of consultations, although at first there was no pervasive distrust or antagonism. The prevailing feeling was that Diefenbaker "did not trust his ministers as St. Laurent did"⁵⁵. Sevigny felt "Most ministers never quite knew where they stood in the esteem and confidence of the...leader"⁵⁶. The many divisions among ministers made mutual trust less likely. It was a vicious circle: distrust and antagonisms generated a lack of consultation, which generated more general suspicions of what others were doing. Alvin Hamilton is said to have entertained an "ugly philosophy" reportedly involving devious manoeuvring, small-scale "espionage", and frankly brutal use of political muscle: he is supposed to have felt that "I just haven't got the time or the temperament to soft-soap a bunch of guys"⁵⁷. Some ministers retreated into their departmental shells. Some became very unsure of themselves, even shirking their responsibilities

or leaning on colleagues. Some cronies gathered to drink and grouse⁵⁸. The number of informal meetings apparently increased to meet the growing immobilism of cabinet decision-making, and increased especially in the last year or two, but more and more they took place in an atmosphere of conflict and intrigue, excluding some ministers⁵⁹.

Sevigny, who made his own contribution to the government's collapse by resigning, spoke of "The constant indecisiveness, the frequent quarrels, the atmosphere of suspicion, the lack of organization, and particularly the lack of contact within our ranks -- these created the atmosphere in which we lived" in the last two years⁶⁰.

Nor was there the mutual restraint and respect for each other's responsibilities necessary to a working system of individual responsibilities. Lack of consultation was as important a sign of this as actual interference, but the latter too occurred. At first there was "not much prickliness" about each other's portfolios, and ministers "tended to share problems" more than under St. Laurent as they "took time to become individually confident"⁶¹. Later, most ministers felt the other minister's portfolio was his business (especially External Affairs which was left to the minister and prime minister⁶²) although the long cabinets still gave plenty of scope for discussions of others' areas. The collegial and political characteristics of the government were still alive, although by the end the "lack

of team spirit" was manifest⁶³. It was felt that while the "general operation of a department" should be left to the minister, the cabinet should intervene wherever any policy was publicly politically sensitive⁶⁴ - wide ground indeed!

"When things started going bad..." ministers "started looking at each other accusingly"⁶⁵. Many ministers increasingly felt Fleming was interfering with them - perhaps it was more his manner than anything else, but he too had reason to be frustrated if it was true that in 1960 "other departments are, in isolation, considering anti-unemployment measures, many of which may be quite uneconomic"⁶⁶. It seemed everyone insisted on "putting his oar in" on economic policy discussions. Whether or not this disrespect for individual responsibilities was justified in Fleming's case, it unfortunately was in some others. Too many in this cabinet were just not able to carry their individual responsibilities adequately. Some were intimidated by government and "felt they had to share too many of the minor decisions", or shirk them. In 1961 Diefenbaker was "worried as to the extent to which the Ministers directly concerned seem to be passing to others the responsibility for initiating and determining legislative proposals in their formative stages", so that sometimes "the Ministers directly responsible did not seem to be familiar either with the details of the bills or their purpose"⁶⁷. Alvin Hamilton, on the other hand, had no compunctions about

interfering in others' policy jurisdictions. There was a "real range of competency" in this cabinet, but "too many were a real burden"⁶⁸, and were not gotten rid of. In 1960 for example, "It is evident that only a small part of the legislative programme is ready, and it seems fairly clear that the sponsoring departments are responsible for this situation"⁶⁹.

For all these various reasons, the St. Laurent system emphasizing individual responsibility had become unworkable - but nothing was consciously or consistently developed adequately to take its place. The consequences were the worst of both worlds. On the one hand, there was a resort to too heavy collective pressures, especially on the responsibilities of the cabinet and the prime minister. On the other hand, there grew up an individualism which undermined the collective, and a resulting cumulative frustration and suspicion. But ministers knew they needed some new structure to compensate for the ones they'd lost or hadn't had, and although they were not successful in time they did try⁷⁰. Cabinet committees were important in the attempt.

XV CABINET COMMITTEES

Development

The public description of cabinet committee operations under Diefenbaker was very brief: "It is well-known that many committees of ministers are formed from time to time, and meet as and when required, to facilitate the working of the cabinet as a whole. Only the two established by statute have power to exercise any legal authority"¹. In practice, however, the story of the use of cabinet committees by the Diefenbaker ministry is an intricate one. It is helpful to sketch their course of development before discussing them in more detail.

Once again, the Diefenbaker cabinet accepted the structure which they inherited. The "necessity for cabinet committees"² was known or quickly realized. In the first month the Cabinet Committee on Legislation, the Special Committee of Council, the Treasury Board, and the Cabinet Defence Committee³ were re-established as they had been outlined to Diefenbaker by the P.C.O. They remained throughout. About ten special committees were set up in the next few months on a variety of subjects: unemployment in June, for example, wheat in July, Columbia River power in August, and the speech from the throne in October. These committees were of varying duration, and apparently about half of them were shortly inactive.

Before long, however, committees began to be used more often and on a greater variety of subjects than had been the case under St. Laurent. Diefenbaker had been uncertain how a committee system would work, and the government had been feeling its way on many issues and getting to know its officials and machinery. During 1958 over 20 committees were operating at one time or another, and in 1959 about 30 (about half of which had carried over from 1958 in some form or other)⁴. One gains the impression that Diefenbaker was not enamoured of ministerial gatherings other than in cabinet but recognized the need for such discussions; ad hoc committees were used more and more but on a haphazard, temporary basis and without much stature or influence⁵. As a result items continued to pile up on cabinet's plate; around the beginning of each session six or ten new committees would be struck.

By 1960 organizational reforms and a cabinet shuffle were needed. Both ministers and officials evidenced "some recognition something had to be done"⁶. There was talk of an "Executive Committee of the Cabinet" or of a system of standing cabinet committees or even of a coordinating deputy prime minister⁷. In February 1960 several memoranda⁸ were prepared by the P.C.O. on a reform of cabinet procedures centering on the establishment of four or five standing committees in response to Diefenbaker's wish to discuss in cabinet "the question of more effective

procedures for the despatch of Cabinet business and in particular the use of committees to lighten the load of the Cabinet as a whole"⁹. The proposed committees would not, however, be "permitted to dispose of matters with finality"¹⁰. Cabinet discussed the matter, but none of these more or less sweeping reforms was followed up. Instead, it was apparently consciously decided to operate the committee system on the basis of an "ad hoc principle"¹¹, in order to relieve the pressure on cabinet and give to important selected issues "deeper discussion and better consultation". It is significant that more radical alternatives were actually considered, but revealing that they were rejected for half-measures.

As the government came to its end in the following years, there was a small trend towards fewer, more general and more lasting committees. In 1960 there were some three dozen committees at one time or other (over half of which were carry-overs); in 1961 slightly fewer (with about two thirds carry-overs); and in 1962 - election year - some two dozen (again about two thirds were carry-overs). However, the figures are slightly misleading for they reflect also the government's growing immobility. The underlying trend was over-shadowed at the time by the contradictory habit of setting up ad hoc committees on many subjects. There were "alot operating towards the end", although "sometimes there were ad hoc cabinet committees that came and went before"

ministers knew it¹²; even the P.C.O. found it "hard to keep track of what ministers met with whom"¹³. There was evidence of groping towards a better way, but ad hocery dominated; by 1963 it was clear that the "ad hoc principle" was not good enough.

Shape

But the overall structure of cabinet committees was not entirely ad hoc: a general shape is discernable. It was not quite the chaos which detailed descriptions of its practice might suggest, nor as completely ad hoc as even the description given to parliament might suggest (although its emphasis upon informality was certainly not misplaced). The continuing core of committees operating under St. Laurent continued under Diefenbaker, though with less firmness and coherency. Also, a certain number of other committees had significantly longer and more important spans of operation than the rest (committees on national development or the Columbia River power development, for example). Moreover, disorder in the committee structure does not necessarily imply the whole government was consistently in disarray - cabinet committees were still not so important in the functioning of this ministry as they later became.

One aspect of the general shape of the Diefenbaker committee structure is number. It is also an indefinite

element. One participant recalled about ten to twelve committees at a time¹⁴; a senior minister felt there had been only about three committees at a time, since it would have diminished their effectiveness if there were more¹⁵. A list from October 1960 named twenty committees as "standing, or ad hoc still to report"¹⁶. The lists are not complete and do not always agree - notable in itself - but it seems that at one time there would have been between 15 and 25 cabinet committees extant. However, many committees were dormant for months and only briefly active. As one P.C.O. official said of his estimate of 15 or 16 committees, "nominally, with degrees of activity"¹⁷. A minister conceded that "there may have been a lot in existence at one time, but the number that could be really functioning at one time was rather limited" - perhaps only four or five he thought¹⁸. A list in February 1960 named seven "principle continuing committees" and even they "could be more effectively used"¹⁹; in fact, only two of the seven seem to have met more than half a dozen times that year (and the seven did not include the Treasury Board, Special Committee of Council or Legislation Committee). If so few of the many committees were actually meeting, then the situation was not so chaotic as it seems at first glance.

The "degree of activity" in conjunction with qualitative judgements suggests a structure with a few positive, if imperfect, elements of stability. Most

important was the inherited operational core of three standing committees.

The Special Committee of Council continued its routine but humbly valuable course of examining and approving orders in council, usually meeting just before cabinet once a week. ("We all had to do our tour of duty in this" said one minister²⁰).

The Treasury Board, chaired by Fleming as Minister of Finance, was vastly more important. It had its statutory position and authority (somewhat further reinforced by the Civil Service Act of 1961), under the cabinet and essentially on its delegation, to deal with "the control of all public expenditures, the annual Parliamentary estimates, the general administrative policy of the public service, and the day-to-day control of administration and expenditures"²¹. It fulfilled its role in more or less regular once-a-week meetings (amounting to some eighty a year) "to consider and approve proposals made by departments and agencies, or by the Treasury Board staff"²². It was the most regular, active and persistent of any important committee. It "ground away", doing "a lot of work" in its "nuts and bolts" responsibilities of controlling expenditures and allocating funds²³. Although it did not deal with broad policy issues, its authority touched every minister and was backed by Diefenbaker's own frugality²⁴. It was "extremely dominant" and "potent in the minds of ministers"²⁵.

However, the Board's approach - more than during the St. Laurent years - was a "negative, nay-saying" one which "drowned" in detail and produced a "penny-wise" view not infrequently in conflict with the more dynamic purposes of ministers²⁶. The Treasury Board came to be seen even more as an antagonist of ministers than usual, not just as a barrier to each minister's fondest dreams but as a more insidious hindrance to the whole government. Its position was somewhere "out there", "not a part of the mainstream" of departments or committees; it seemed dominated by its officials and their like-minded Minister of Finance²⁷. Its many decisions of detail sometimes amounted to an unrealized establishment of priorities, and in a direction which infuriated the cabinet's expansionists; as one said, the "sum total of all the little decisions could kill a cabinet policy"²⁸.

The legitimacy of the Treasury Board's behaviour began to be questioned. Some of the ministerial criticism from the inside was substantially confirmed by the Glassco Report's first volume (July 1962), which spoke of the Board's members who "can give little time or attention to its work"²⁹; of its "tradition of detailed control of departmental administration, as a result of which it has to consider about 16,000 submissions annually"³⁰; of its heavy reliance on its staff "to evaluate and make recommendations on each submission"³¹; and of "the niggling detail that now

clutters the Canadian Treasury Board"³² because of its over-detailed central control. But it was too late to make major structural reforms during the Diefenbaker years, when the Board's contribution to stability was countered by its disruptive aspects.

The third of the core operational committees was the Cabinet Committee on Legislation. It met less regularly than the others, but probably at least as frequently, "coordinating the preparation of legislation, giving it an orderly and careful review, bringing out points of substance that require consideration by the Cabinet generally, and otherwise ensuring that the legislation is completely studied both as to substance and form"³³. Thus it continued essentially as it had under St. Laurent, acting as an expression of collective decision-taking but as a drafting rather than a policy committee. Though it probably did not enter very far even into "House planning" it was perhaps more active and important than it had been: some ministers tended to leave some of their responsibilities to be settled there, and Fulton's strength as chairman encouraged this³⁴. The committee was "extremely valuable"³⁵ but not controversial.

In addition to this operational core of the committee system were a few continuing committees of high policy. These, however, were rather less persistent and less successful than the core committees. The Cabinet

Defence Committee had a slow start and it functioned with less influence on cabinet³⁶ than in the past. Still it met more frequently and was more important than most other committees. It met three times in 1957, five times in 1958, and eight times in 1959, but then declined rapidly with only three meetings in 1960, four in 1961 (three in January and one in December), and two in 1962. Not dissimilarly, the new and potentially vital Cabinet Committee on National Development - set up in 1958 "to formulate and express the government's national development policy and to coordinate the suggestions and plans of departments relating to such a policy"³⁷ - began with high hopes, meeting twice in 1958 and seven times in 1959, but hardly at all after that. Another new committee, on the Sessional Programme, began with equal or greater hopes and responsibilities in 1960, but before long declined into only periodic and relatively technical activity: this committee, however, is one of the most intriguing of them all. Both these new committees suffered from difficulties at the centre of this cabinet's structure; they will be remarked upon again.

Another group of committees consisted of a series which continued over some years, but were used in a very ad hoc and intermittent way, and dealt with medium or low level policies in areas of enduring concern. Some had St. Laurent predecessors - for example, the committees on territorial waters, re-formed in 1958 and meeting sporadically three or

four times a year; and on emergency plans, formed in 1959, meeting ten times that year and about half a dozen times a year afterwards. Other such committees were established under Diefenbaker. Several were included in the 1960 list of seven "principal continuing committees"³⁸, which noted committees on wheat (which apparently met infrequently and disappeared in 1961), uranium (persistent but obscure), and Columbia River power development (which in 1961 was being treated "optimistically as 'ad hoc'"³⁹).

Other committees of this group shaded indefinitely into the largest group of committees, the certain majority, which included those of a clearly temporary and ad hoc nature (though not necessarily of brief formal existence). Though constantly shifting and varying, this group of ad hoc committees was nevertheless less "fuzzy" around the edges than the St. Laurent "fringe" committees had been.

Character

Despite such patterns, however, the practices of cabinet committees were generally inconstant and of increasing disorderliness. There were many small indications. Despite attempts to reconstitute the Privy Council Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research, it met only once or twice from 1957 to 1963⁴⁰. The cabinet committee to prepare for the 1957 federal-provincial conference was apparently set up just a month in advance⁴¹. The Cabinet Committee on

Territorial Waters met "very infrequently since most submissions...are cleared with the three Ministers through their departments"⁴²; in November 1962 it was said that its last meeting "seems to have been held" in August 1961⁴³. An effort was made in 1960 to discipline the system, and it was promised then that revised committee lists would be periodically circulated - but it seems this could not be done⁴⁴.

Ad hoc committees can serve very valuable purposes, but this was all too ad hoc. The distinctions between standing, continuing, and ad hoc committees which had barely begun to emerge under St. Laurent again nearly disappeared. Continuing committees were treated as ad hoc. More and more items were referred from cabinet to the Legislation Committee⁴⁵ rather than vice versa, for example, and even the Treasury Board was used in the typically ad hoc pattern of "to cabinet, to Treasury Board, and back to cabinet"⁴⁶. There were too many unnecessary spur-of-the-moment committees, such as the one in 1961 "to study the policy governing statutory holidays for the civil service"⁴⁷. How could ministers take committees generally as a serious part of formal cabinet structure under these circumstances? And they often didn't: committees frequently met with extreme informality, and some seem to have hardly meshed with the cabinet secretariat machinery at all. Ministers "didn't feel any strong lines between

cabinet committees and informal meetings"⁴⁸, which exemplified their attitude to organization.

The results were not surprising. Even officials admit the structure of cabinet committees was seldom seen in the whole⁴⁹, as a system to be used constructively rather than merely as one haphazard method amongst others. Some committees were important individually, but there was "no real relationship among cabinet committees"⁵⁰. Moreover, the relationship of cabinet committees to ministers individually and - particularly important - to the cabinet was not consistently thought out.

Uses

This is not to say that committees were not widely or prominently used. They were. In fact, they performed an extraordinarily wide range of uses and delved into many subjects - so much so that to disentangle them into a coherent set of purposes is nearly impossible. Ministers themselves recall not only different numbers of committees, but also very different committee uses. Some of these uses were not premeditated; they certainly varied by committee.

The general purposes of committees were first, simply to save cabinet's over-burdened time; and second, to allow deeper consideration of a matter than cabinet could give so that the way was prepared for a better cabinet discussion later⁵¹. These two basic purposes covered a

multitude of sins. There was a general coordinative value to many committees since they would have "to do chiefly with policy overlapping several departments"⁵². Many committees were direct responses to political and public pressures, sometimes overlapping with so-called "ministerial meetings to discuss some controversial matter that required careful consideration of political implications"⁵³. It is not surprising that many committees were spur-of-the-moment responses to minor annoyances. It is hard to see cabinet committees as other than ill-considered when set up "to study the policy governing statutory holidays for the Civil Service"⁵⁴, or to look at "Royal Visit; cost of band at government reception, position of Ottawa Musical Protective Association"⁵⁵.

Certain uses of cabinet committees do emerge as worthy of some note, however. Committees were often used to study particular policy proposals large or small. The proposals might originate within the government - as with the committee in 1960 to review an official report on the adequacy of existing unemployment statistics⁵⁶, or the Cabinet Committee on Immigration set up in 1958 "for the purpose of studying and reporting back on recommendations submitted by the Minister"⁵⁷. Or they might be stimulated from outside, as with the Cabinet Committee on Legislation to set up a National Energy Board which had been proposed in 1958 by the Borden Royal Commission⁵⁸; or the 1959 Committee

on revision of the Civil Service Act proposed by a special commission⁵⁹.

Committees were also used in developing policy proposals, another sign of the more collegial approach to collective decision-taking. Occasionally such committees were supposed to coordinate policy development in a wide and vital area, as was the Cabinet Committee on National Development. Sometimes committees were used to develop policy in areas of medium scope, such as a 1962 Committee on the Long Term Balance of Payments. Most often committees to develop policy were aimed at more or less specific projects - some ministers considered this the most important role of committees⁶⁰. This group of committees ranged widely from one "to consider the methods by which the federal government might assist in the development of power in the Maritime Provinces, and in particular assist in the financing of the Beechwood project"⁶¹; to one "to work out measures to relieve against inequities in the freight rate structure"⁶²; and another "to consider and report upon the whole question of charges for parking privileges on government property"⁶³.

There was a further variety of uses of cabinet committees. Some of the most central and important committees coordinated government operations in one way or another. Others than the Legislation Committee were also used to consider draft legislation in detail, such as those on the National Energy Board and the Civil Service Act.

Some committees, such as one on the Queen's Visit in 1959⁶⁴, actually directed and administered the details of a project. Committees were set up to prepare for conferences and negotiations. The Committee on the Columbia River was "largely a negotiating committee"⁶⁵ for a treaty. And quite frequently committees were used to draft public statements of one sort or another, from major matters like a speech from the throne⁶⁶ to terms of reference for royal commissions such as that on Government Organization (for which two quite different committees were established on consecutive days to draft and redraft terms)⁶⁷.

Several uses were somewhat more subtle. Committees were used as a delaying tactic either to get disputes out of cabinet (though they often came back), or to delay a decision until the facts, and hopefully a consensus, would emerge⁶⁸. The Cabinet Committee on Freight Rates was apparently set up in 1959 as a result of a dispute between Churchill and Alvin Hamilton, and Fleming - freight rates have been a major political bone of contention between west and east for decades in Canada⁶⁹. Some committees were used in practice by ministers for different ends than they were intended to serve. Some were used by weaker ministers to do their jobs for them, for example, as happened with the Legislation Committee. Some ministers proposed committees to study their proposals in order to delay going to cabinet until others were committed to them, as "a better chance of

getting my way"⁷⁰. Or they attended committees such as Treasury Board or the Legislation Committee as a way of finding out what other departments were doing⁷¹. One minister recalls he found cabinet committees "invaluable" as a means of helping to control the civil service (though he added this was not a conscious reason for their use)⁷², because ministers could either discuss issues in detail without officials or confront them as a group. Unfortunately, this too often meant cabinet committees were to be found wasting ministers' time and talents doing the detailed jobs of interdepartmental committees.

A fair number of committees also changed their predominant character over time, exemplifying the fluidity of the cabinet committee structure. Some, such as those on oil policy and the Montreal pipeline, or on transportation, or even the Legislation Committee, moved from fairly specific beginnings to consideration of more general or more diverse matters, though still in an ad hoc rather than a systematic way. More often committees went from general origins to specific practices: this fate embraced the Committee on National Development as well as most of those which had first diversified from specific origins. Most committees turned out not to be very influential, so dominant and so over-burdened was the cabinet. Certainly most committees seemed "paper powers"⁷² compared to Treasury Board. Moreover, considering the number of cabinet

committees and their scope, it must be suspected that many of them took up time which could have been better used, if only in a better organized system of cabinet committees.

Forms and Practices

The forms and practices of Diefenbaker cabinet committees were not very different from St. Laurent's. Cabinet committees under Diefenbaker were nearly always formally established by cabinet decision, an organizational step also reflecting the collegial approach through cabinet and Diefenbaker's own preferences (although of course they might have been first proposed by the P.C.O. or individual ministers).

- Membership

The structure of cabinet committee membership is revealing. Membership primarily suited the function of each committee, but the variety of committee uses made that criterion less than precise. The Special Committee of Council's "composition...varies, depending on which ministers are available"⁷⁴, but the others were more stable. One minister's impression was that the main criteria were a combination of the departmental roles and interest involved, and the prime minister's judgement of personal suitability, with a feeling of more limited importance that cabinet committees should be regionally representative⁷⁵.

It looks like Diefenbaker did emphasize personal factors, considering that "some names occur naturally" and assessing which ministers were strong or weak on detail, or had some special knowledge⁷⁶. Ministers such as Churchill, Starr and Alvin Hamilton were appointed to quite a few committees because of their personal qualities and relations with Diefenbaker. A minister's previous experience could be important too, even in a negative sense: MacLean was on the Legislation Committee because he was "not a lawyer or technical person" and a man with "common sense"⁷⁷. Its members in particular were appointed with "personal qualifications and interests"⁷⁸ in mind - lawyers, including a representative of Quebec civil law, were the first requirement, although there was a feeling that it should not "be over-burdened with lawyers" (half and half was the aim in 1959)⁷⁹.

It is clear, however, that recognition of personal factors had to take place within the context of more methodical, if still less than systematic dispositions. It was generally felt, as in one particular case, that a committee should "include those Ministers having a special portfolio interest in the field..., and possibly some others"⁸⁰. It was particularly satisfactory when "This large Committee appears to include all those Ministers most interested, either by area or portfolio"⁸¹. The effect sought was a combination of individual responsibility in

membership with a comprehensive collective decision-making forum; there was more of an emphasis on the latter than during the St. Laurent years.

The first consideration had to be "to ensure that the departments concerned would have representation"⁸². The members of the Cabinet Defence Committee were consistently listed by portfolio rather than name. Occasionally ministers were listed as committee members "ex officio". The listings make clear, as the logic of cabinet government demands, that committees included the affected ministers whoever else might also belong. Other portfolio considerations also bore: Balcer as Secretary of State was added to the Legislation Committee because his portfolio allowed him "leisure to attend the meeting"⁸³, but as Minister of Transport he was taken off the Treasury Board for the opposite reason⁸⁴. Portfolio factors could become entangled with personal considerations, as happened when Fleming was kept off the National Development Committee apparently for reasons of the supposed discouraging influence of his portfolio and his style⁸⁵.

The second consideration was regional representation. The most important aspect of this, more important than under St. Laurent, was the evident feeling that ministers politically involved in an issue through their regional role, or with special knowledge because of it, should be on any committee discussing that issue. On the

Committee on Oil Policy, for example, Nowlan "represents the Maritime interest"⁸⁶. This criterion was sometimes felt so strongly that some committees were virtually entirely made up of representatives of affected regions: the Cabinet Committee on Coal, in 1962, included none "who are not the regional representatives of the various coal mining industries"⁸⁷ (though portfolios might coincide with regional interests). Other committees were also regional in focus and in make-up. This was mainly - perhaps significantly - the case with "western committees" such as those on wheat and the Columbia River.

The criterion was still primarily one of affected representation, not of overall regional balance as a microcosm of cabinet's balance. Nevertheless more comprehensive considerations were also developing in line with this cabinet's more collegial approach and greater political and regional consciousness. There was the fairly well established convention of including a French Canadian (normally from Quebec) on committees. Not infrequently this seems to have been an afterthought prompted by PCO reminders⁸⁸; the convention was far from invariable either due to neglect or because no Quebec interest was obviously touched upon (as with the Wheat Committee). Beyond this convention, however, there was a growing feeling that important committees should at least not be over-balanced by one region. There was some concern, for example, that the

Committee on the Sessional Programme had taken on "a rather heavy Ontario weighting"⁸⁹, and that the Committee on Oil Policy in 1960 was "rather heavily weighted with Western Ministers bearing in mind the serious Quebec and Maritime implications"⁹⁰.

These concerns were part of a larger trend towards committees that were regionally balanced in a positive sense, including representatives of all regions not simply from interest but also with the idea that a better balance would help achieve a more thorough debate. Some committees clearly demanded such a balance: in 1957 it was thought that the Committee on the Federal-Provincial Conference had "a proper sort of geographical distribution as well as including at least most of those with a particular interest in this range of problems"⁹¹; it included one minister each from B.C., the Prairies, and the Atlantic Provinces, two from Ontario, and one anglophone and one francophone from Quebec. Other committees were roughly regionally balanced as well, which had not always been the case. In November 1960, about half of the committees had at least one representative from the West, the East, Ontario and Quebec (and at least one francophone), though some were weighted in one direction or another. Several other committees were largely regional in scope anyway, but still some were surprisingly unbalanced, such as the Committee on Immigration. It is significant that of ten committees

without at least one representative from all four regions, none lacked a westerner, two lacked an Ontarian, five lacked an Easterner and six lacked a Quebecer. Evidently the balance of affected interests still overshadowed the newer concern of a general regional balance, but it may also have been that westerners were more concerned with redressing regional imbalance.

The overall structure of committee membership reflects the interaction of all these factors. A November 1960 list of 20 committees, the product of a thorough reconsideration of committee memberships, included 126 memberships by 24 ministers⁹². The average number of memberships was six, but the median was only four: a minority of ministers had a larger than average number of memberships. The prime minister had one, Fleming had 13 (not surprising for the Minister of Finance), Alvin Hamilton (Agriculture - a central concern of the Diefenbaker government) had 11, Harkness (Defence) had 10, Fulton (Justice) and Churchill (Veterans Affairs) had 9, Nowlan (National Revenue) and Starr (Labour) had 7, and Hees (Trade and Commerce) had six. The other sixteen had fewer. Seven Ontario ministers averaged about six memberships each (three Ontarians had more than the overall average); four Atlantic ministers averaged five memberships (one had more than six); six Quebecers, including one anglophone, averaged about four memberships (none had more than the average); and six

westerners, not including the prime minister, averaged eight memberships (four had more than the average). These figures clearly bear out the regional make-up and characteristics of the ministry.

The choice of committee chairmen was entirely up to the prime minister, of course. They were, it seems, chosen mainly according to their portfolios, but unless there was one obvious portfolio chairmanship then personal considerations might take over. Walker (Public Works), for example, succeeded Alvin Hamilton (Northern Affairs and National Resources) as chairman of National Development, and Nowlan (National Revenue) was chairman of the Committee on the Sessional Programme. Several committee chairmanships were ex officio - notably Treasury Board where the chairmanship belonged to Finance by statute - but, in contrast, by Diefenbaker's choice Churchill remained chairman of the Special Committee of Council⁹³ despite Dorion's appointment as President of the Privy Council (a logical choice for chairman). It is worth noting another example of the distinction between formal organization and cabinet practice: Fleming as chairman of the Treasury Board attended 35% of 80 meetings in 1959, whereas Nowlan as vice-chairman attended 55% - in practice Nowlan was the most frequent chairman of the Board⁹⁴.

- Size and Attendance

The size of cabinet committees varied too. The committees on the November 1960 list averaged 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ members. There were five four-member committees, four with five members, two with six, three with seven, one with eight, two with nine, one with ten, and two with twelve. This seems to have been as regular as they ever were. Certainly there was no shrinking from variety: two committees appointed by the same Record of Decision⁹⁵, on "legislation to assist small business" and "amendments to the National Housing Act" consisted of seven and three members respectively. A committee's size was not a simple reflection of its importance, but seems to have depended on its function and the breadth of its implications for portfolio and regional responsibilities. The new standing committees proposed in 1960⁹⁶ were (very provisionally) allocated five members each by a P.C.O. official. Eight appeared to have been an acceptable size at least for one committee in October 1960, but a ten-member committee was called "large"⁹⁷ by the P.C.O., and it was hoped that the Sessional Programme Committee would not grow beyond ten⁹⁸ - it did almost immediately, to twelve, and was considered too large⁹⁹.

As under St. Laurent, the formal size of a committee was not necessarily an accurate indication of the size of its meetings. There seems to have been no general

permission for any minister to attend any committee he wished, but non-members were usually invited if their responsibilities were affected by a particular discussion. Occasionally a committee would invite the prime minister but he rarely attended¹⁰⁰. More generally, for example, "Ministers sponsoring memoranda were invited to attend meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation for the dual purpose of explaining their recommendations and of becoming more familiar with their legislation"¹⁰¹. Sometimes a minister would have a formal standing invitation to attend "if he can and wishes to do so", or "when financial implications are under consideration"¹⁰². In fact, it was not unheard of for a minister to attend a committee regularly without being a member¹⁰³.

The more frequent problem was with too meagre attendance, especially of continuing committees. The relatively active Committee on Emergency Plans, established in 1959, by 1962 had two inactive members one of whom had never attended¹⁰⁴. In 80 meetings of the Treasury Board in 1959, the highest individual attendance rate was Nowlan's 55%¹⁰⁵. Of nine members of the Legislation Committee in September 1959, five attended "fairly regularly", one had an "only fair" record, two had attended only one meeting each, and one "attends only when items concerning his department are on the agenda"; there were rarely more than four at a

meeting and an arbitrary but unsatisfactory quorum of three had to be established¹⁰⁶.

But ministers were not the only people who attended cabinet committees. As under St. Laurent, a P.C.O. official normally attended all meetings, and "other officials are frequently present at Cabinet Committee meetings"; both would often participate in the discussions¹⁰⁷. There was no generally applied rule or formula about official attendance, but though commonly accepted it was never to be taken for granted as it had been under St. Laurent. In a few cases a committee's terms of reference might specifically state, for example, that "a number of officials should attend, including the Secretary to the Cabinet"¹⁰⁸. The more usual formula would have the committee act "with the assistance of officials as required"¹⁰⁹. Normally there was no such reference, and practice varied by committee and chairman. The Legislation Committee particularly needed officials to help it and expected their attendance. The Treasury Board likewise: it had its own expert and influential bureaucracy¹¹⁰. In some committees it was "customary for members...to have appropriate officials of their Departments attend"¹¹¹, though in others they were asked to attend when the chairman "thought it would be appropriate"¹¹². Some ministers often brought their officials to meetings, and occasionally their political advisers too¹¹³, but others didn't. Committees

were less likely to be attended by officials when they were of the briefer and more political sort, or at the first couple of meetings of a more general committee when ministers were establishing its focus, but in many cases official attendance became frequent and even numerous¹¹⁴. An instructive case is the Defence Committee where "in 1957 an effort was made to limit the number of officials in attendance to one from each department. The record shows that the rule - if rule it was - was soon breached and the body of officials plus Chiefs [of Staff] soon again outnumbered the Ministers by three or four to one"¹¹⁵. Nevertheless, even here they remained on sufferance - at least once in 1960 the prime minister as chairman dispensed with their services¹¹⁶.

- Meetings

The preparations for committee meetings were largely in the hands of the P.C.O., though in a few cases information was regularly circulated among committee members directly by departments¹¹⁷. Normally preparations depended on circumstances and the committee's purpose rather than on a more regular functioning, but there were exceptions such as the Defence Committee. The Cabinet Committee on Legislation dealt routinely with a great deal of documentation - there were lists of proposed legislative items, followed by explanatory memoranda, followed by draft bills. However, regularity and routine was slow to develop with this

cabinet, and continued precariously. Even the Defence Committee by mid-1958 had "not yet developed its own working arrangements fully under the new government"¹¹⁸, and its meetings became relatively irregular and infrequent from 1960 on.

Meetings of nearly all committees were irregular. They were called to deal with particular submissions or with interdepartmental committee reports or for specific purposes. Not nearly enough was sent to committees to justify regular meetings in most cases. Even the Defence Committee had no regular schedule, though Treasury Board and the Special Committee of Council had a rough-and-ready regularity. A relatively active committee such as that on Emergency Plans (in 1961-62) met after a lull of several months "to keep in touch with this active programme and deal with a number of questions of policy that have arisen"¹¹⁹. It was up to the committee chairmen to call meetings but except in infrequent cases of particularly active chairmen - and especially after the first flush of a new committee's activity - officials were the normal source of stimulus. As a political insider put it, "in terms of cabinet committee formation and functioning much depends on P.C.O. prodding"¹²⁰. As one chairman wrote realistically, "I shall be obliged if you will notify me whenever the officials consider another meeting of the Cabinet Committee to be necessary"¹²¹. Even when a meeting was desirable, however,

it could take some time to arrange it. The P.C.O. had to get in touch with each minister to try to find a convenient day and time, and then a meeting could be aborted by an unexpected cabinet meeting. Many declined into passive waiting or complete dormancy after a few months of awareness, if they had not existed more briefly. Outside the established core committees very likely fewer than half a dozen committees met over 20 times during the whole period, and fewer than a third of all committees over three times. Not many more than a dozen committees endured over a year and only about another five from 1957 to the end.

Negative and Positive: The Place of Committees

- The Negative

These are rough statistics. To convey more of the quality of committee operations and their part in cabinet structure requires some general propositions.

Despite their numbers the primary functions of most cabinet committees under Diefenbaker were still "negative", as they had been under St. Laurent. Though not insignificant, committees were kept subordinate in theory and practice to cabinet discussions and coordination. They could prepare the way for cabinet but they were no substitutes for its decisions or even its deliberations¹²², even to the extent they were under St. Laurent. Cabinet committees, one participant recalled, were used for

"exploring not deciding". Another emphasized their place was mainly "to collate the technical information" necessary for a cabinet decision. They "did no quarterbacking of the government's work", and despite their "great number" they "did not form a great part of day-to-day decision-making"¹²³. It was not that committees couldn't make influential contributions to decision-making - some did, and their recommendations could be fairly promptly accepted. But when that happened it was usually on recommendations of more or less technical detail. On even minor issues of public import as well as "questions of policy" and anything contentious, the cabinet was the really important and attractive forum. Even Defence Committee reports were debated "for hours". Treasury Board tended to keep to detailed issues, important as their effects could be for departments, while "flagging the big ones for cabinet"¹²⁴. One committee was cited as particularly "well done" and important: it "worked on policies and legislation" setting up the National Energy Board - and "then cabinet went through it all"¹²⁵.

- The 'Ad Hoc Principle'

It was a step forward to make the conscious decision in early 1960 to follow an "ad hoc principle"¹²⁶ of cabinet committee function. However, it was the fact that alternatives were brought forward and a decision made that was most important, for the "principle" was not crowned with

anything more than intermittent and individual successes. The decision was taken surprisingly quickly. It involved rejecting the potentially better alternative of a set of standing committees, but that alternative too was conceived in haste and was not itself either clear or comprehensive. The remedy adopted was consciously and more frequently to employ as a "principle" the technique of appointing an ad hoc committee in cabinet at the point where it was clear to Diefenbaker that the discussion had gone as far as it could without descending into details that required the attention only of "interested ministers" (and often their officials) to settle on alternatives and a recommendation upon which cabinet could focus.

The resort to this "principle" showed the ineffectiveness of interdepartmental consultations, and also the cabinet's organizational ineffectiveness. To a degree it was simply a rationalization of the existing ad hocery and a failure to do anything to improve it. There were benefits. The committees did help save cabinet's time and did have useful discussions, and the fact that they acquired a more general justification and rationale apparently helped some of them to consider more general problems. As a principle, however, ad hocery was completely inadequate to cope with the burdens put upon it. Diefenbaker himself said that "we had embarked on so many new programmes and had established so many new priorities" that coordination was

inadequate¹²⁷. Ad hocery did not in any one area nor for the overburdened cabinet meet the need seen even then for "some group not absorbed in the day-to-day"¹²⁸. The cabinet did not lean upon its committees - however often it used them - enough to allow it to fill this need.

The "ad hoc principle" also created problems of discontinuity. Several times similar subject matters were referred to quite different committees months apart. There were at least four or five committees on specific dealings with the provinces at one time or other, when one general committee on federal-provincial relations would surely have been a great help. Time was wasted by issues going all the way to the cabinet before being referred to a committee, only to return to the cabinet. Each committee likely depended more than ever on including two or three hard-working ministers with knowledge of their own, since none developed a continuing knowledge of the committee's subject matter. And the proposing minister was probably either too strong, since he had taken his formulation of the issue as far as cabinet before discussing it with his colleagues, or was frustrated by their insistence on going over ground he had already covered to his own satisfaction. And the continuing committees there were, such as Legislation, were sometimes undercut by the appointment of new, ad hoc committees. The government's collegial habit of considering too detailed issues collectively was not effectively

discouraged. The "ad hoc principle" was sapped by the very problems of informality and irregularity which ought to have been alleviated, which it in fact embodied and exacerbated.

This is part of a more general problem: the "vicious circle" which had afflicted committees under St. Laurent became far worse under Diefenbaker. Their lack of authority, their lack of order and regularity, and the view of their purpose and uses as "negative" and ad hoc, all fed on each other so that drawbacks were reinforced. Committees which were used erratically, only meeting upon circumstances whether technically permanent or not, naturally were used less and less often until they didn't meet when they could have helped. Out of sight, out of mind. Erratic committee use encouraged no use at all. Gaps in the coverage of cabinet concerns by committees meant no consistent habit of using committees developed, accompanied by sometimes casual disregard of them. This pattern developed even though it was interrupted periodically by increasingly desperate attempts to employ committees on higher policy. The greatest sign of committee weakness was the difficulty in getting meetings together: even the Treasury Board and the Legislation Committee were affected; some very minor committees apparently never could meet at all¹²⁹. A senior minister recalled that ministers were all "enthusiastic for others to do committee work"¹³⁰.

Such a situation was in the long run encouraged, almost legitimated, by the resort to the "ad hoc principle". In the short run it no doubt helped cabinet feel less swamped and able to slough off nuisance concerns, but even ad hocery as a principle needed less ad hocery in practice to make it work. The vicious circle could only be broken by more formalization of committee practices, a more coherently planned and organized system of committees, and a positive concept of their authority and role.

- The Positive

This lesson was not entirely lost on the Diefenbaker ministry. It was in its own time and way moving towards positive formulations of cabinet committee use. Though the collegial approach was very much focussed upon cabinet, it also promoted some reassessment of committees. Individual committees could and did do constructive jobs. The government could not have done without the Treasury Board or Legislation Committee, and ministers knew that other committees made real contributions in a wide variety of areas. But this was no more than a start.

Moreover, within the the enveloping ad hocery there were tendencies towards developing and using new, stronger, more continuing and more general committees beyond the core operational ones. Specific alternative ideas for committee structures were considered, notably the set of "standing committees to which we would refer subjects"

briefly considered in February 1960¹³¹. The idea of giving committees "executive power to make decisions to be confirmed at the next Cabinet, rather than merely to render advice" was also considered once or twice, mainly within the P.C.O.¹³², but could not take hold in this government. There were also scattered ideas for particular uses of committees, such as to control the civil service, which never became of general significance. These ideas foreshadowed the future but did not much shape their present.

There were also particular committees which demonstrated an enlarging tendency. The Legislation Committee dealt somewhat more with substance than it had under St. Laurent¹³³. The Cabinet Committee on National Development had its wide-ranging terms of reference covering what was seen as a functional field of issues¹³⁴, though it never really filled so high a place. Several committees were used beyond their original terms of reference. The Committee on Coal, for example, was formed to consider specific proposals of the Rand Royal Commission but considered other questions relating to the coal industry¹³⁵; and the Committee on Transportation formed to consider the MacPherson Commission's proposals for rail transport was used to discuss civil aviation questions¹³⁶. New to Canadian cabinets was the Cabinet Committee on the Sessional Programme which was responsible for "House planning"; but

from its "highly political" perspective - especially in 1960, its first of several "temporary but active"¹³⁷ manifestations - it did "attempt to give coherence to everything the Government did"¹³⁸.

Moreover, in retrospect it is clear there was an unconscious but felt need for a general committee on economic policy. A series of committees, National Development first, then as economic conditions deteriorated the committees on the Sessional Programme in 1960, on the Long-Term Balance of Payments in 1962¹³⁹ and on the Commonwealth and the European Common Market in 1962-63¹⁴⁰, all seemed to tend in different ways towards becoming committees on larger economic questions: but all turned out to be temporary and of ad hoc usage. This lack of a general economic committee was serious, as a close participant agreed¹⁴¹.

The movement towards more positive concepts of committee use foundered, however. One or two ministers not only pushed in practice for such developments but also saw the "functional need" for some "differentiation"¹⁴² between ad hoc committees which might continue for some time, and real standing committees of broad intent. But the need was not seen clearly or soon enough, by enough ministers or even by the right ones. The prime minister and the most executively able ministers, and even the P.C.O., were probably so busy simply coping with problems of substance

that they couldn't spare time for thought or action to revise cabinet structures.

There was another gap even in these positive movements. On the one hand there was a tendency towards continuing committees, which were still much less than catch-all coordinating or broad policy committees in their fields. On the other hand there was a tendency towards too-big, all-embracing but ill-defined committees which because of their vagueness became bogged down in a multitude of unrelated individual programmes. The mean was hard to strike.

Life Cycles and a Pattern

We thus return to overall cabinet structure and to the general structural themes of this cabinet, in particular to the gap between ideas and actions and the fatal yet fruitful obsession with "vision". The life cycle of many of the most important committees embodied in microcosm the government's efforts to achieve its ideals. These committees were like a series of balloons which were blown up bigger and bigger until they finally fragmented. The other difficulties with the Diefenbaker cabinet structure, the "negative" and limited place of committees, the "ad hoc principle" and its failures, the vicious circle, and the deficiencies of the movements towards more positive committee functions, all play their part in this pattern of cabinet committee behaviour.

This pattern perhaps applies even to many short or medium-term committees. The Cabinet Committee on Coal began "to consider and make recommendations on the proposals contained in the report of the Royal Commission on Coal"¹⁴³ in late 1960; by 1962 it was considering other contemporary issues related to the coal industry. However, not only did it exhibit the ad hoc characteristic of meetings grouped about occasions rather than spaced regularly, but in practice it embraced only specific issues referred to it rather than any comprehensive function. The Committee on Transportation began in 1962 to review reports of a Royal Commission on railways, and though it expanded to a more general coverage of transportation including civil aviation, it too in fact considered only specific issues¹⁴⁴. These committees grew and continued beyond their original scope, yet always in practice they returned to specific questions, few and sporadic as they were, rather than becoming general policy committees with continuing responsibilities.

The pattern is especially striking with the major cabinet committees which put the most effort into realizing the government's ideals. As with the government as a whole, an imaginatively large but vague vision bogged down in a welter of detailed programmes. The Cabinet Committee on National Development's "purpose" was "to realize the vision"¹⁴⁵. It was chaired by the energetic Alvin Hamilton and backed by the prime minister. It was, and was

recognized as being, "of very great potential importance", with terms of reference so wide it might "include almost all activities of governments and of private enterprise in Canada"¹⁴⁶. Yet right from the first meeting it found it impossible to consider together everything involved in national development. It never did consider agricultural policy, which Diefenbaker said in 1960 was "the very cornerstone of national development"¹⁴⁷. Instead of formulating overall policy and assigning priorities the committee found itself with responsibilities so broad and unspecified that it could only get to grips with individual programmes. The committee "in practice tended to deal with specific proposals and objectives rather than all-embracing ones"¹⁴⁸. In its first year it met fewer than half a dozen times; later Hamilton relinquished its chairmanship: it remained on the books, but "faded away in a couple of years"¹⁴⁹.

The 1962 Cabinet Committee on the Long-Term Balance of Payments was another which seemed to have wide implications, despite its relatively limited title. It worked towards "a longer term economic programme"¹⁵⁰. Yet it too tried to embrace so much - and in so short a time, too, in order to help pull together a legislative programme to save the government - that it ended by trying to find a policy, rather than by developing one, in a collection of items as diverse as the tourist trade, the automobile

industry, and the Glassco Report¹⁵¹. Its last-ditch effort was lost in the government's collapse.

A particularly intriguing and revealing committee was the Cabinet Committee on the Sessional Programme¹⁵². It was primarily political in focus, and functioned from time to time from 1960 on as a cousin of the Legislation Committee concerned with putting together a programme of legislation. However, in its origins and its first year or so of existence it was far more than that. It began as an informal group, apparently towards the end of 1959 or in the first months of 1960, with Diefenbaker's knowledge and tolerance but not under his direction. It met informally at ministers' homes "to keep off the press" - and, perhaps, some of the participants' colleagues. It was a kind of "brains trust" including amongst others Alvin Hamilton, Walker, Churchill, Nowlan, Starr and sometimes key political advisers or occasionally top officials such as Bryce. Perhaps it was influenced by the rejected idea of an executive committee of the cabinet. It notably did not include Fleming at first: there was "a feeling there should be more input from cabinet colleagues into budget thinking"¹⁵³ to the extent that this committee met "to try to come up with better economic proposals, to try to be a countervailing force"¹⁵⁴ to what was seen as the conservative wing of cabinet allied to the Department of Finance. The committee was part of the struggle between the cabinet's conservative

and expansionist wings. More than that, as its members met through the spring of 1960, the committee expanded its views to attempt to "pull everything to do with economic policy-cum-national development together in one great flourish"¹⁵⁵, to try to "raise their horizons" to get the government "to look at the long range problems"¹⁵⁶. In March, Fleming had presented a balanced budget (his aim for years), but within days the economic indicators wrecked its assumptions and the expansionists were strengthened¹⁵⁷. In June of 1960 the committee seems to have been put on a more formal basis as the Cabinet Committee on the Sessional Programme, and was taking aim in a "highly political" way at the fall session, but for a time it was informal enough to be apparently referred to as the Cabinet Committee on Employment¹⁵⁸, or on the Economic Programme¹⁵⁹. By early autumn it was taking into account Diefenbaker's own conclusions drawn from his summer meetings with government economists. About that time it began reporting to cabinet. Fleming was brought into these meetings as the programme was hammered into concrete shape for presentation and the committee "settled the general thrust"¹⁶⁰ for the government. Cabinet discussions were interminable, however. Despite all this effort and all the ideas thrashed through in these "happiest moments" of one minister's "cabinet life"¹⁶¹, the high hopes and comprehensive debates did not succeed in re-establishing and embodying the "vision" in practice. A more expansionary

outlook and a number of programmes resulted, but this great effort still finished as a detailed Cabinet Committee on the Sessional Programme, which was revived in the next two years with only a legislative and short-term focus. The "balloon" burst here as elsewhere.

Conclusions

Cabinet committees demonstrated their value more widely and frequently than ever in the Diefenbaker ministry. However, its structure of cabinet committees cannot be called a success, even in its own ad hoc terms. The St. Laurent structure probably was, but the Diefenbaker ministry's terms were less modest, and recognized inadequacies even when too little was done about them. There were positive changes but they were inextricably and increasingly linked with worsening ad hocery. Even the principal continuing committees could have been more effectively used. Even the established Cabinet Defence Committee not only suffered "limited success" of "attempts to systematize the handling of Committee decisions on major matters" and "the reporting to Cabinet of Committee decisions", but its meetings also declined in frequency and regularity after 1960¹⁶². This cabinet failed to cope organizationally with problems admittedly not all of its own making. It was burdened with the disadvantages of ad hoc committees and few of the advantages of continuing

committees. Committees which could and did make useful contributions were still caught between these two roles. The use of cabinet committees was not clearly enough thought through, nor consistently enough followed.

But specific contributions were made towards the development of cabinet committees. A more rigorous ongoing use of lists of committees and their memberships, a planned structure of standing committees, continuing functional committees and even nearly executive committees, were all foreshadowed, along with particular committees such as a central economic policy committee and even a rough executive committee of the cabinet. All these were touched upon even if they were not followed up. Canadian government had to be shown the need for these measures; the Diefenbaker cabinet was never quite seized of that need even as it demonstrated it. Not a few of the ideas which gained some currency in the Diefenbaker years became established only later in other cabinets.

XVI THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

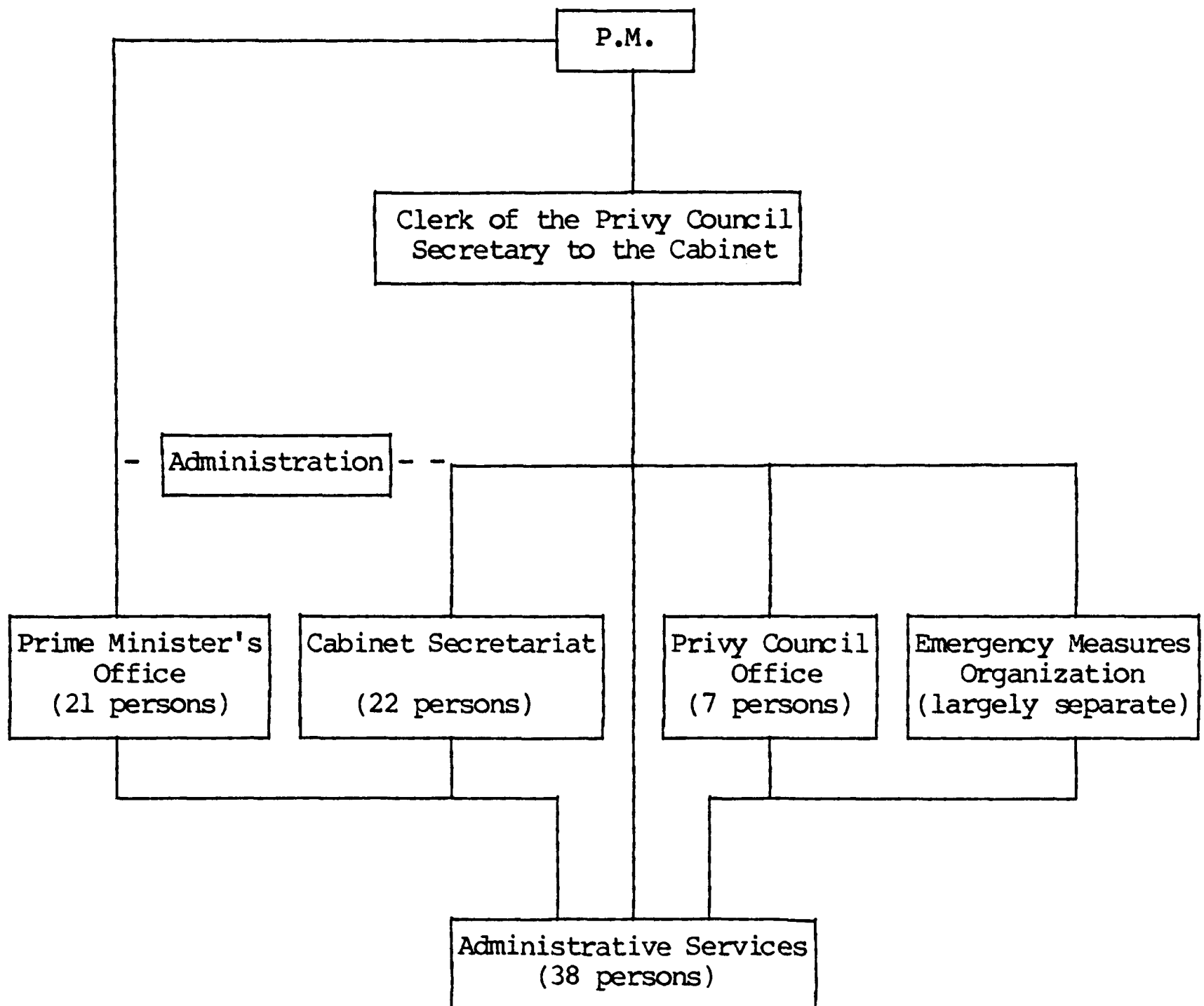
Operations Along Traditional Lines

The development and functioning of the P.C.O. as a sub-structure underlying cabinet operations and supporting collective decision-taking continued fundamentally along previous lines under Diefenbaker. Its organization, its procedures and - with some hesitation - even most of its personnel were accepted. One crucial function of the P.C.O. which had been implicit before was solidly established by that acceptance - the function of helping to provide continuity across changes of ministry. Partly because they knew this Conservative ministry would be suspicious and inexperienced the P.C.O. did not take the opportunity, as they did in 1948, 1963 and 1968, to propose changes in organization and procedure¹. The ministers, and Diefenbaker himself, were very sensible of the tact and ability of R.B. Bryce as Cabinet Secretary in this delicate and unique situation, and throughout the period².

This is not to say there were no changes in P.C.O. organization during the Diefenbaker years, but the changes were not fundamental. There were changes in personnel, one or two because they were distrusted by Diefenbaker as Liberal sympathizers³. The ideal of short-term service by secondment to the P.C.O. was better met under Diefenbaker than under St. Laurent: the Secretary

to the Cabinet was Bryce throughout, and his assistant clerk and the registrar did not change, but six different men served in the two and later three assistant secretary positions. Some new positions were created, and the military liaison officer was not replaced, but such changes were few enough and the office small enough that it seems the prime minister was consulted well before any decisions were taken even in regard to the most junior positions⁴. Administratively, "the workload is very much heavier than under Mr. St. Laurent, because of the very much heavier volume of correspondence"⁵. The branches of the P.C.O. maintained their functions as outlined under St. Laurent. An organization chart prepared for the Glassco Commission in February 1961 is useful⁶:

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (21/2/61)



In February 1963 a Bureau of Government Organization was attached to the P.C.O. "to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations"⁷ of the Glassco Report, though the Bureau later became responsible to McCutcheon as its own ministerial head⁸. The number of employees was about 90 in 1961 and in the next two years rose by about ten, maintaining the roughly half-and-half division between P.C.O. and P.M.O.⁹. There was in the P.C.O. "a rather high proportion of senior officers to junior officers, as compared with an ordinary department, because of the nature of our work"¹⁰. The P.C.O. remained small in size, consisting still of "a small group essentially of troubleshooters and relatively versatile secretariat types"¹¹, each of whom took responsibility for a roughly connected series of government operations.

The functioning of the P.C.O. was also similar to that under St. Laurent, but - an important but - naturally adapted to the persons and characteristics of the Diefenbaker government. Though the division was not complete, the substance of P.C.O. operations had "little to do with" Diefenbaker's P.M.O. except in respect of external affairs¹². For his P.M.O. Diefenbaker was not so much concerned with policy or executive expertise as with political and personal help; he "did not seek to use the P.M.O. as a counterweight to or substitute for cabinet

committees or ministers at all"¹³; this character was accentuated by its loose and personal organization.

The practical work of the P.C.O. was very well summarized by an informal communication in 1959¹⁴. It is worth quoting at length for its understanding as well as its evidence of what, compared to the greatly expanded modern P.C.O., might be called the "old P.C.O." model.

"The Privy Council Office is really the department of the Prime Minister...He has no other department... [The P.M.O.] is within the [P.C.O.] for administrative purposes though of course the senior secretaries deal directly with the Prime Minister himself in regard to correspondence, appointments, the preparation of speeches and generally personal and political questions with which he is dealing.

"The [P.C.O.] itself deals with the Prime Minister through the Secretary to the Cabinet on matters relating to the Cabinet, government policy, relations with departments, etc. In fact, he deals directly with various ministers as well and there is always a problem as to what could be taken up through the Secretary to the Cabinet and what directly with Ministers. Only judgement and experience settles this, as well as the personal relations involved in each channel.

"In the organization of the office itself we have a group which we call the [P.C.O.] proper that deals with formal legal actions of the government...The remainder of the office, aside from administrative units and service units,... constitute in effect the Cabinet Secretariat...

"On paper, the main job of the Cabinet Secretariat is to prepare the agenda for the Cabinet and records of the Cabinet's decisions and see that the agenda and explanatory papers are properly circulated for the information of Ministers, and that Ministers and others who may be concerned with decisions receive them for action.

"At times in the past we have also circulated to Ministers only...our Cabinet Conclusions...At various other times, including the present, these Conclusions have not been circulated but simply a bare record of the decision necessary for action to be taken upon it...

"The Secretary to the Cabinet...attends all Cabinet meetings...Also one of the Assistant Secretaries attends and normally two or three of them rotate during the meeting [making notes, and then preparing Conclusions which the Secretary corrects]. Occasionally he will consult with the Prime Minister to be sure of his understanding and interpretation of the decision in particular, and occasionally on major points made in the discussion. Only infrequently is it necessary to correct the account after examination of it by Ministers. The minutes are never submitted for approval at a subsequent meeting...

"In fact the Secretary and his staff also perform a considerable number of other functions. Many of these relate to Cabinet Committees and to Inter-departmental Committees of officials. The Secretary or one of the Assistant Secretaries normally attends all Cabinet Committee meetings. There he can and does participate in the discussions. He may act as secretary of the Committee or have someone else do so...

"In addition to this, Ministers may consult with the Secretary to the Cabinet or one of his Assistants regarding matters they propose to bring before Cabinet or questions that are coming up for decision in future. The role of the Secretary and Assistant Secretaries in this process is a highly personal one and depends upon the relations of the individuals concerned. We have found, however, that it is a useful and productive role but it must be carried on very discreetly and with care to respect the roles of Ministers and of their own senior officials.

"The Secretary or on occasion an Assistant Secretary acts often as Chairman of committees of officials from various departments. His selection for this role is based on his relative neutrality as between various departments as well as his contact with the Cabinet and the Prime Minister. In addition, the (P.C.O.) normally provides a secretary for these interdepartmental committees...

"In addition to this formal interdepartmental function, the Secretary and his senior staff are frequently consulted by officials of various departments in their process of endeavouring to seek agreed recommendations to Ministers which will thereby avoid thrusting upon the Cabinet itself or its Committees the task of reconciling divergent points of view of officials. Again the role of the officers of the Cabinet office in this function depends a good deal upon personal relationships. In this case too it is necessary to carry it out with considerable discretion, as it is important that Ministers should know if in fact there is a real divergence of views between officials. Our process really is to see to it that any divergence of advice given to Ministers is not based on a lack of knowledge or understanding but reflects well-informed opinion tested by discussion with those who may hold contrary opinions".

The Old Roles Maintained

Bryce in these years brought the "old P.C.O.", which was to be elaborated and augmented after 1963, to its height. The long quotation above indicates its aims were essentially those developed for the P.C.O. originally, inherited from the St. Laurent government, and cemented by their acceptance by its partisan opponent in 1957. An innovation was indeed mooted - that a formal group be constituted within the P.C.O. that would not be involved in its administrative or secretarial chores, but would provide "independent advice" of the "general practitioner type"¹⁵ - but this was contrary to the traditional concept of the P.C.O.'s functions which Bryce believed in and Diefenbaker supported. The proposal never flowered.

The formal charter roles of the P.C.O. were conscientiously kept up: the 1940 "charter" remained the

P.C.O.'s basis. The description of P.C.O. activities quoted makes that clear, and the statement of functions prepared for the Glassco Commission in 1961 bears it out. The P.C.O. still put its primary effort into "arranging and organizing the work of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Interdepartmental Committees related to it"¹⁶, including the preparation of agenda, the recording of conclusions and decisions and their communication to ministers, and the assembly and distribution of documentation for cabinet or committee consideration.

All of this added up to an essential basic coordination of cabinet and collective decision-taking activities which was, if anything, even more indispensable to this government than the last. There were also other more or less formal activities, the special tasks for which the P.C.O. was responsible in areas such as federal-provincial relations, atomic energy and senior appointments and its "coordinating authority" in the area of emergency measures planning¹⁷; the role in respect of legislation, working with the Legislation Committee and initiating the sessional process of asking ministers for notification of proposed legislative items¹⁸; and its general responsibility for organization which involved it in such matters as keeping an eye on committee membership and operations¹⁹. These responsibilities probably absorbed even more of the effort of nearly all P.C.O. officers than before, partly

because this ministry was more suspicious of any pushy officials than its predecessor, and partly because it became more difficult to perform these organizational tasks efficiently and consistently - as the discussion of cabinet and cabinet committees suggested.

It appears that the traditional problems in P.C.O.'s functioning as outlined for the St. Laurent cabinet structure not only persisted under Diefenbaker but were magnified. The problem of politicization was made more critical because, on the one hand, Conservative ministers new to government after decades of opposition were suspicious of the "Liberal" civil service (and some never lost this suspicion); indeed Bryce was so careful to avoid any appearance of political bias that he made a point of avoiding old friends in the press gallery²⁰. On the other hand, the Diefenbaker ministry operated with such a high political consciousness that it probably was sometimes difficult to avoid being drawn into political activities. The new Liberal prime minister in 1963 showed no actual distrust of Diefenbaker's P.C.O., but he apparently felt he needed a Secretary to the Cabinet less closely involved with his predecessor than Bryce²¹.

The disorganization and informality which permeated the government, and the burden it placed upon cabinet, must also have magnified the difficulties involved simply in performing the basic P.C.O. roles effectively. A

not inconsiderable reflection of this problem was the failure to revise and circulate the procedures document. Certainly the P.C.O. found repeated difficulty in keeping up with its paperwork and the prompt circulation of documents²². It seems, for example, that P.C.O. learned the composition of one cabinet committee only on receiving a copy of a letter from the prime minister to its chairman²³.

The problem of illegitimate P.C.O. power was somewhat less of a danger because the Conservative ministers, particularly Diefenbaker himself, were constantly alert to any such encroachment and because day-to-day chores absorbed so much P.C.O. time. In a sense, however, some wide-ranging P.C.O. presence and influence was even more of a necessity, to meet those problems of disorganization and coordination. The P.C.O.'s effort to satisfy these contradictory demands rested nearly entirely on Bryce personally; his role will be discussed in more detail later.

The fourth P.C.O. problem was its dual role as cabinet office and as prime minister's department. This duality might have put the P.C.O. under quite a bit of pressure because of Diefenbaker's emphasis upon utter loyalty. It was his P.C.O. even more than it had been St. Laurent's - "The Secretary to the Cabinet here is regarded as the Prime Minister's own senior official"²⁴ - yet in order to fill its other roles the P.C.O. had to be trusted by the rest of the government too, both ministers and

officials. That it succeeded was a great tribute, but its efforts also took a toll of time that might have been used in longer-term reflections upon the government's organizational difficulties.

The P.C.O. was in a difficult position. It had to reduce its salience, treading carefully especially in its role as the central cabinet office contributing to overall coordination, while at the same time meeting the greater demands put upon it by the new ministry and prime minister, both consciously and by their needs. The P.C.O. found itself frantically trying to coordinate everything and get decisions from cabinet almost by itself it seemed, without ever feeling it quite had the authority to do so.

Its response to this dilemma was twofold. Its first response was to re-emphasize for the operations of the office and the behaviour of its officers the essential principles and conventions which applied during the St. Laurent years. A clear focus upon the P.C.O. charter roles was their first priority: they were careful to regard themselves not as any sort of "master coordinator", but as charged just with "carrying out the dictates of cabinet"²⁵. They emphasized their concept of the P.C.O. "as a troubleshooting centre, not a power centre" with a more comprehensive role²⁶; they were not "activists" in planned development of policy. They did not establish any systematic briefing capacity in P.C.O.. P.C.O. officers

were supposed to fill their roles, and especially the less formal ones, flexibly, informally, and personally. It was felt strongly that the P.C.O.'s "basic neutrality" and trust by other departments was essential to its troubleshooter capacity and to its important role of helping to work out the necessary compromises²⁷. They tried to avoid second-guessing departments, so that one minister recalled his contacts with the P.C.O. as "largely technical"²⁸. To further its own job the P.C.O. was continually concerned with fostering good relations with departments, to perform the difficult trick of keeping up to date with what was going on. Greasing the wheels might involve satisfying External Affairs' requests for copies of cabinet documents even though "these requests have usually been due to the fact that they have found it more convenient to obtain the document from this office than through their own somewhat cumbersome filing system"²⁹. They were concerned with keeping the P.C.O. relatively small and unthreatening, and they succeeded. Ministers did not feel interfered with, it seems clear. One or two participants of an active disposition even felt too little central impetus from the P.C.O. and thought it too "conservative in this sense, too cautious"³⁰.

The Indispensable Secretary to the Cabinet

The P.C.O.'s second response to its position went further. It took the form of a greater-than-ever emphasis upon the position of the Cabinet Secretary, or rather - for in keeping with the government's style it was a very personal place - upon the crucial role of R.B. Bryce. The solution to the P.C.O.'s dilemma was for virtually all of the office to restrict itself to its formal roles and an interpretation of its informal roles strictly in line with the traditional conventions, while allowing and encouraging everything of a sensitive or fundamental nature to devolve upon Bryce. He was completely and without any doubt "the boss". The role suited his abilities and character³¹.

As Bryce himself wrote, however, "The duties of the Secretary do extend considerably beyond the mechanical ones but their nature and significance depend to a large extent upon personal relationships and it is very hard to generalize or formalize this"³². Bryce's role during these years was made possible first by Diefenbaker's absolute trust, which Bryce proved he deserved in the first trying months of the inexperienced prime minister, and second by the cabinet's trust in him³³. He was one of the very few civil servants all ministers trusted throughout. The general view was apparently expressed by a minister who characterized him as "highly competent and extremely correct in not trying to pursue or unduly influence decisions"³⁴.

All of this rested upon Bryce's own character, abilities and experience. He was "completely loyal". He had "an enormous range"; he "knew so much about government, and who could do things". In particular, he had been "with the Treasury for fifteen years", and as a result had "more contact with financial policy"³⁵ than his predecessors, who had had a diplomatic background, just at the time when the Government's preoccupation above all was with financial and economic matters. "Mr. Bryce", recalled Diefenbaker, "was dependable to the utmost degree"³⁶.

Bryce's role as Secretary to the Cabinet involved several aspects which hardly anyone else could have combined. He was, of course, very close to the prime minister, whose sole "chief of staff" he was (only later was this role expanded and split between the Cabinet Secretary and a Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister)³⁷. His advice was generally oral and "privy to the two of them" alone. Diefenbaker "wanted to know what the real issues were", as one near him believed, not a voluminous coverage of absolutely everything; Bryce's forte was precisely in focusing on and crystallizing the key points, which could be discussed verbally between them³⁸. Moreover, Bryce was well "plugged in" to the government establishments and informal networks, which Diefenbaker and his ministers were not, so that he could and did brief the prime minister on

alternatives being discussed in departments before they came to cabinet.

But Bryce managed also to be a trusted adviser and even confidant of many of the individual ministers. One participant recalls he "advised ministers on a lot", he "was sought out by ministers and they relied on him"³⁹; another spoke of "all sorts of calls to Bryce from ministers"⁴⁰ who used him as a sounding board, trial balloon, and general help. One minister, for example, jotted a note to Bryce about a proposal asking "Would you please consider and advise me as to appropriate manner and appropriate time to put this forward with best chance of success?"⁴¹ Ministers collectively, too, relied upon Bryce. He submitted information to cabinet on behalf of the prime minister and other ministers, at their request⁴², and his own summaries and even advice, apparently, on matters as diverse as economics and the situation in Berlin⁴³. He periodically prepared for cabinet lists of "Possible Items for the Legislative Programme" and of "Major Issues for Consideration"⁴⁴.

Occasionally the cabinet, in appointing a new cabinet committee, would specify that the Secretary to the Cabinet should attend⁴⁵. He was in great demand, and carried a fantastic burden of committee secretaryships, chairmanships and attendances. A list dated April 1961⁴⁶ showed Bryce as Secretary to the Cabinet itself, of course,

as well as to two other cabinet committees and in attendance at nine others; and in a list of 23 interdepartmental committees as chairman of ten and a member of five more⁴⁷.

This in turn gives some idea of Bryce's role as the adviser and confidant of many civil servants, too - he was a crucial link himself between cabinet and civil service. Sometimes his contacts and work with departments were at cabinet's requests⁴⁸. He could also take the initiative in getting involved, and in "making sure cabinet policies and decisions got through to departments"; officials also frequently contacted him for his help⁴⁹. However, he was "mainly concerned with policy-making that affects several departments rather than within a single department"⁵⁰, and it was apparently not unusual to find him "endeavouring to get the two departments into agreement on the matter so that cabinet need not be delayed by this relatively small issue"⁵¹ (in which he was not at all always successful).

Consequences

The consequences of this crucial role played by Bryce were of several sorts. He brought the "old P.C.O.", to its zenith. This side of his position, and that of the P.C.O., is brought out by a talk Bryce gave in 1962 in which he reportedly spoke of his position as one without authority, subject to everybody's direction, responsible for

keeping the machinery of government running smoothly and effectively, as a sort of professional neutral as between parties as well as between departments, and as "a chore boy for whoever is Prime Minister - so long as he pleases"⁵².

All this is quite true, if put somewhat modestly, and in guiding the P.C.O. by these traditional principles Bryce made a great contribution to the Diefenbaker government. But there was another and perfectly complementary side to it - the side that made Bryce himself, not just his position, indispensable to the cabinet's work. It was put most fully by one who worked with him, and described him as "incredible", "devoted", a "tower of strength" and a "very important focus of attention". "Everyone said fix it with old Bryce"⁵³. The summary of another is an accurate reflection of the government's characteristics and Bryce's role - "he did it all, swinging from a chandelier"⁵⁴. Bryce and the P.C.O. made a significant contribution to the government's functioning; their influence on actual policy-making would be much harder to assess.

At the same time, however, Bryce's position demonstrated the lack of a well-organized and consistently operated structure for cabinet operations, and it also contributed to the failure to remedy that situation. The P.C.O. made great procedural efforts, but it never really came to grips with the necessities and possibilities for more fundamental and far-reaching structural reform. Partly

this was because coping with day-to-day responsibilities pushed other considerations aside. The twofold response to the dilemma in which the P.C.O. found itself was a barrier, too: the procedural details of structural reform meant that Bryce, with his extraordinary and sensitive responsibilities, was less likely to become involved in it; but its quality of generality and its far-reaching consequences meant that other P.C.O. officers, with their side of P.C.O. operations to keep up, were also unlikely to initiate structural reconsiderations. In addition, the divisions and characteristics of this cabinet made structural reform an uphill struggle. Bryce's personal inclinations did not encourage him to be "seized of a need to do anything structural about the cabinet committee system"⁵⁵, for example. His own accustomed style, colleagues recall, was to do a great deal informally and bilaterally, by lunches and telephone rather than any more structured system.

But beyond particular factors is the fundamental one that in this situation the limits and deficiencies of the "old P.C.O." style were brought to the fore, though it is not surprising that those caught up in it saw this less clearly. The traditional style was not activist or structurally focused (as opposed to procedurally) or, perhaps, ambitious enough to bring P.C.O. easily to an appreciation of structural reform rather than more piecemeal and informal remedies. While working to support the cabinet

and helping operate the structure it did have, Bryce and his P.C.O., with their views, could not in time bring about the more sweeping restructuring of cabinet relationships that was increasingly necessary. It was the Liberal ministries after 1963 that were able to harvest the structural fruits of the Diefenbaker experience.

XVII THE CIVIL SERVICE

Relations with Ministers

The most striking structural themes of the senior civil service under St. Laurent were their close inter-relationships encouraged and permitted by their relationships with ministers. The most striking theme of the senior civil service under Diefenbaker was their changed and very different relations with ministers, which caused important changes in civil service inter-relationships as well as in the role played by the civil service in respect of cabinet structure.

Civil servants were distrusted in general by most of the new Diefenbaker ministers. They rightly believed that the civil service and the St. Laurent Liberals had grown too close, but they also suspected this implied a continuing partisan attachment: that was not quite fair. No doubt many officials voted Liberal, but very few behaved as Grits in their professional careers. Suspensions were at first reinforced as ministers found their officials generally unfamiliar with Conservative policies and so seemingly unsympathetic. There were real differences of outlook, certainly, between the ministerial "outsiders" and the official "establishment" they hardly knew¹, and between these very political ministers and the professionally neutral civil service; but much of this was a matter of

strangeness that could be dissipated. The new administration was a shock to officials and ministers both, but a "necessary readjustment" after the early "suspicion on both sides" did take place². There were some changes in areas such as the wheat trade, where there had been "too many past criticisms"³ (Diefenbaker says he appointed Churchill Minister of Trade and Commerce to clean out that "Grit hive"⁴). Before long the level of distrust declined substantially. Some ministers, however, never lost their general suspicion of officials' partisan leanings⁵, and in the bitterness towards the end suspicions revived somewhat⁶.

But there was a deeper feeling about officials that persisted more stubbornly. Ministers tended to see their perspectives and those of officials as naturally opposed, and to retain habits not of personal or partisan but of stereotypical distrust of bureaucrats. One gains the impression that this was an important barrier between them⁷. Ministers felt they had to overcome an ingrown certainty on the part of officials that was not justified by practice. Officials agree some of them were "maybe a little too smug in some areas". Though it was probably temporary in most cases, ministers were for quite a while prepared to see in officials an "assumption of divine power" almost, an attitude that "we know best because we have the knowledge". They were seen as "stale in drive and dreams". Moreover, it was easy and tempting for inexperienced ministers to believe

at times that their officials were attempting to dominate them. It was not a matter of "sabotage" but of a sense they "knew best", ministers sometimes felt, and was expressed in the "swamping of ministers" by great loads of detailed documentation, and in the "monolithic" presentation of agreed recommendations to ministers.

There was some truth to this no doubt, but how much is impossible to sort out⁸. It would not be accurate to depict the Diefenbaker years as a prolonged struggle between officials and ministers. Most ministers in practice did not seriously mistrust their officials. But the underlying tone was there. Even a minister as close to his officials as Fleming was sensitive to any "suggestions that everything is a question of settlement between departments when in fact Ministers are involved"⁹. It was always an appealing argument to suggest a proposal "enables close ministerial control"¹⁰.

But there were very great differences in ministerial relations with the civil service according to individual circumstances and over time, becoming closer as people got to know each other. The differences were encouraged by Diefenbaker's intuitive rather than rationalist approach. He did not spend much effort trying to "think of mechanisms to control the civil service"¹¹. Cabinet committees, for example, were not meant to be "instruments of control" and were not used as such except by individual

members¹². It was left up to the individual ministers according to their own lights. Some ministers, as in every cabinet, were submerged in detail - and for some who were it may have been just as well. Some ministers, such as Harkness, were "square and direct"¹³ with their senior officials and were well-served but not dominated by them. One or two, however, were "if anything too damn loyal"¹⁴ to their officials - Fleming in particular.

On the other hand, there were at least several ministers who consistently "distrusted the civil service" and "always looked for political bias" in them, including, it is said, fairly important ministers such as Churchill and Walker¹⁵. One minister expressed the view that many of the government's deficiencies were due to the lack of "a dedicated and positively oriented support staff at the deputy minister level", where officials were "politicized" and would "not go out of their way to be helpful and cooperative"¹⁶. That was an extreme view but he was not alone. Diefenbaker himself, it seems, did not feel quite that way, and certainly trusted Bryce, but apparently he never placed great confidence in the civil service at large¹⁷. As "a real political animal" he "didn't really like experts"; in particular he was "leery" of External Affairs officials, and never overcame his suspicion that they retained an unworthy loyalty to Pearson¹⁸.

It seems a fairly widespread attitude was to trust one's own officials, but to regard the civil service in abstract with a certain disapproval. Alvin Hamilton is supposed to have got along fairly well with his deputy minister, but in respect of the rest of the civil service to have gone so far as consciously to employ an assistant to "ferret" out their doings¹⁹. In fact much of the generalized dislike of official attitudes probably stemmed also from feelings of frustration with the Department of Finance, which was so central and the views of which were advanced so persistently and even tediously by Fleming²⁰.

Consequences within the Civil Service

Within the senior civil service, in its own internal relationships, these ministerial-civil service relations had important consequences. The Diefenbaker experience went a long way towards smashing, for good and bad, the tendencies towards civil service solidarity. Officials themselves realized it had to gone too far²¹. This is not to say there weren't many informal communications and relationships across the civil service - without them any government and its necessary collective decision-making processes would completely collapse under their own weight. Indeed, in some respects there may even have been more of this sort of thing going on, what with Bryce's style and crucial coordinating position in the P.C.O. But that

was in a particular area and in particular circumstances. In general, such relationships seem to have diminished and, more importantly, taken on less significance. The circulation of cabinet and cabinet committee documents to officials was curtailed²². There was more insistence on ministers receiving alternatives to discuss and most departments were pretty careful in this regard, though there were still "ones to watch"²³. Most telling of all was the clear change in atmosphere, so that habits of unnecessary official interaction or pre-arrangement were considered illegitimate. Officials "didn't try to produce much" solidarity amongst themselves under Diefenbaker "as he was suspicious of it"²⁴.

Naturally there was an effect too on the structure of interdepartmental committees. Ministers who worried about monolithic official advice were not supporters of the interdepartmental committee system. There "were in fact still alot of interdepartmental committees", and they were not a negligible presence²⁵. The Cabinet Secretary was present at some fifteen of them²⁶. Some still reported directly to cabinet. Many top officials still met in the Interdepartmental Committee on Trade and Economic Policy, and they reported their advice to cabinet - but disagreements were carefully reported to ministers too. There were still quite a few interdepartmental committees serving cabinet committees. Accompanying the Cabinet Committee on the Civil Service Act, for example, was a small officials'

committee which met "from time to time...to take up questions arising in the drafting of the bill and decide whether they needed to be brought before the Cabinet Committee"; they hoped to "clear up a number of the details without bothering Ministers but would draw them to their attention when the bill itself is ready"²⁷. Most committees "continued to work pretty well under Diefenbaker", recalled an official²⁸.

However, they apparently did decline in their ability to do a complete job and in their influence, especially on relatively high policy. Some committees were "very effective", but they were generally the "technical committees" or ones concerned with the "narrower aspirations of interdepartmental cooperation"; with a few exceptions they "didn't feed into the main artery" of policy-making²⁹. There were some fields of policy such as federal-provincial relations where "officials met a good deal one way or another"³⁰; some such as emergency planning where a fair complex of interdepartmental committees existed³¹; and others such as welfare where transitional work between general programme arrangements made for "a good deal of interdepartmental work".³² But there was probably a certain under-use of interdepartmental committees, with more issues than before worked through by ministers collectively. Certainly committees couldn't or weren't allowed to compensate for cabinet level collective decision-making

deficiencies as they had under St. Laurent. Interdepartmental committees had reached their height under King and St. Laurent, and under Diefenbaker "were on the way down"³³. As one official reflected of interdepartmental committees in 1963, "it is my impression that these have diminished somewhat in activity and value in the last six or seven years. They used to be much more dynamic forces, especially in the economic field"³⁴. A systematic use of cabinet committees had not yet taken their place, however.

Consequences for Cabinet Structure

Certain structural consequences flowed from all this, though they are stated tentatively and do not assess the policies the system produced. The machinery of government was not completely disrupted under the Diefenbaker ministry; in many cases, as in one, all departments and ministers involved were consulted "in the usual way" and "the machine ground it out"³⁵. But most frequently this was at a relatively low level. Moreover, once it was clear what ministers wanted and that they were willing to take the political risks, the "civil service would do first class work"³⁶, and do it loyally. Ministers worked in greater harmony with their officials over time, but the whole emphasis and tone was a new one, and its apparent consequences were important.

First, from being not sharp enough the ministerial-official division became too sharp. Some of the healthy links were broken (unavoidably perhaps), and - with not uncommon exceptions - there tended to be too little real exchange of views between ministers and officials for both to do their jobs at their best. Second, in reaction to the atmosphere of suspicion in some ministerial quarters - again with exceptions - the civil service tended to withdraw somewhat, in the worst cases in a vicious circle of distrust-withdrawal-more distrust. It seems clear there was no sabotage involved in this, despite subsequent insinuations³⁷, but the civil service was demoralized by the experience. Most were willing to work for the new government; indeed despite the surprise of the Liberal defeat some officials thought the change was a good thing³⁸. Then they felt rebuffed and at arms length just as the ministers felt overwhelmed and undermined.

The Diefenbaker ministers made their own jobs harder, too. They did not always appreciate the positive contribution officials could make towards governmental coordination. Ministers tried to do too much, particularly in cabinet, that could and should have been farmed out to officials: the sense some had of being swamped was partly their own fault. Indeed, most of the more successful ministers did place a fuller confidence in their own officials at least than did their colleagues³⁹, but they did

not always trust other ministers' officials or the civil service generally. They did not themselves appreciate the importance of a regular structure of cabinet operations, but they seemed to have the feeling that "the civil service ought to be able to work the machinery"⁴⁰. Organizational problems were sometimes blamed on civil servants who would also have been blamed for showing undue initiative in making the machinery work.

But in the long run these shocks to the ministerial-civil service relationship were salutary. They worked towards re-establishing a healthier balance in that relationship and healthier divisions within the civil service too. The Diefenbaker ministry may have moved clumsily and suffered the consequences, but it suffered in a good cause.

XVIII CONSEQUENCES

In contrast to the St. Laurent ministry the ideas and practices of the Diefenbaker cabinet structure were not well integrated. The gaps between sweeping ideals and intentions and relatively piecemeal actions certainly cannot all be laid at the door of cabinet structure, but they were reflected in cabinet structure and the structure's deficiencies contributed to them. The various contrasts between the cabinet's formal organization and its actual character, and between its collegial aims - and achievements, too - and its individualist practices remain.

A 'Collegial' Approach¹

Individual ministerial responsibilities were emphasized much less under Diefenbaker than under St. Laurent. The primary emphasis became collective decision-taking; the approach was fundamentally collegial, though the machinery was not reorganized accordingly. The cabinet was treated more as exemplifying "government by committee" and less as a plural executive. Individual responsibilities were not disregarded or consistently interfered with - "the general operation of a department was left to the minister himself"² - but they were regarded differently than under St. Laurent. Diefenbaker took pains to uphold the view that no one minister "is senior and another junior in the

relations of a prime minister and the members of his cabinet"³, but the conclusion drawn was not (as it had been under St. Laurent) that individual responsibilities should be emphasized and decentralization maximized, but rather that as far as possible all ministers should be involved together in making policy. Ministers' independence was checked and their motivation to use their responsibilities imaginatively was gradually constrained by the focus upon cabinet decision-making and by Diefenbaker's own methods of controlling ministers. Ministers had scope for initiative - as witness Alvin Hamilton's career - but it was too often blocked from final fulfillment by cabinet busy-ness.

Moreover, individual responsibilities were somewhat diffused. Under St. Laurent, for instance, primary responsibility for civil defence was assigned to one minister (the Minister of National Health and Welfare) with coordinating assistance from the P.C.O. and the Cabinet Defence Committee; under Diefenbaker the coordination was maintained but responsibility was distributed among three ministers⁴. Broader instances were Alvin Hamilton's wide activities and of course cabinet's own "interminable" operations.

Individual responsibility was diffused not only by the greater collective emphasis but also by the several cross-cutting divisions which tended to encourage ministers' concern with their colleagues' activities. The regional

roles of ministers, in particular, became more important: more regional understanding was indeed needed, but its great salience under Diefenbaker made government harder too. Individual responsibility was also weakened by ministers' inexperience, by weaker ministers who could not or would not fulfill their responsibilities effectually, and (perhaps more importantly) by misjudged ministerial appointments. Fleming, for example, carried his central agency responsibilities as Minister of Finance too far and too persistently when he could only irritate other ministers; the response - seemingly supported by Diefenbaker - was for other ministers to disrespect his responsibilities in return. Thus the bases did not exist under Diefenbaker for the dispersal of individual responsibility which prevailed under St. Laurent.

The new collegial emphasis recognized some of the real needs of this or any government, but it failed to recognize others and was not implemented successfully. Cabinet solidarity around collective decisions was re-emphasized. Indeed, Harkness resigned on this principle. But the emphasis was taken to almost self-defeating ends when Diefenbaker was so offended by leaks that he ended the circulation of cabinet conclusions - a symbolic denial of the importance for collective decision-taking of internal openness.

The Diefenbaker collegial emphasis reflected a view that collective decision-taking meant not merely the reaching of decisions all could accept, but the reaching of decisions all had taken together, at least by actively signifying a consensus and preferably by actually participating in the formulation of the decision. This was tied to a realization that an earlier stage of cabinet or ministerial influence than had prevailed under St. Laurent was important to carrying out new policy directions, and to a recognition of the necessity of more strategic thinking, collectively arrived at, to animate and guide the ministry's efforts. However, this collegial emphasis was not matched by the institutions needed to carry it through. Far too much pressure was put upon the cabinet's time and capabilities; it became so clogged with business that the strategic thinking upon which so much stress was laid was never accomplished, and the individual programmes meant to express it developed as a hodge-podge.

Furthermore, cooperative approaches to collective decision-taking were weakened by the ministry's divisions and seriously underestimated. Apparently it was expected that cooperation would follow if solidarity and collegial decision-making were rigorously enjoined upon ministers, and this was just not true. Under Diefenbaker collective decision-taking was primarily compulsory, however much ministers might agree with it, rather than more voluntary in

character as it had been under St. Laurent. The significance for collective decision-taking of informal relationships declined; they were more confused and seemingly imbued with a vague feeling of illegitimacy. In the end hanging separately seemed preferable to some ministers to hanging together.

Mutual political sensitivities could have tied ministers together, and were supposed to do so. Political considerations were certainly emphasized. Moreover, Diefenbaker recognized the constructive importance of engaging politics with government, and that collegial cabinet operations could be promoted by a general political sensitivity which could both link ministers together (sharing as they do an interest in each other's political credit in their regions and responsibilities as well in the cabinet's general political credit), and encourage involving ministers' different concerns in a wider outlook or even a "vision". But political concern was too predominantly with tactical, public relations, electoral, and parliamentary considerations. A minister friendly to Diefenbaker recalled that "everything was subordinated to politics"⁵ - the opposite of St. Laurent's difficulties in this area! An effect on cabinet structure was to reinforce the centralizing belief in collegial decision-taking, since so much affected campaign politics. Ironically, this emphasis also undermined attempts to do valuable strategic thinking, even

in less ambitious arenas than the cabinet; the Cabinet Committee on Long-Term Balance of Payments Measures, for example, seems to have become a committee on a jumble of specific promises and measures⁶. The importance of political sensitivity in operating cabinet structures was illuminated by the Diefenbaker ministry's successes, but its disadvantages came to predominate.

Some Consequences for Structural Practice

Some of the most notable practical consequences of the Diefenbaker cabinet structures thus contrast with consequences of the St. Laurent cabinet structures, yet the two also shared similar problems.

They shared an imbalance between formal and informal mechanisms, with too little of the former to give enough shape to the latter. The imbalance inherited from St. Laurent posed graver difficulties for the Diefenbaker cabinet with its broader intentions and very different character.

The Diefenbaker structure was centre-dominated but fragmented. The stereotype of a government run by Diefenbaker's personal direction⁷ does not seem accurate, but nevertheless the strength at the prime ministerial and cabinet centre of the structure, with the collegial emphasis, was striking. The Diefenbaker structure, however, did not have the institutional framework - and did have too

many personal divisions - to carry off the new emphasis successfully. The structure fragmented in practice partly in reaction to this inadequately sustained centralization. The puzzle of Diefenbaker as an "indecisive autocrat" seems less perplexing - he conducted a formal structure of cabinet operations in which he was "not peremptory or arbitrary enough", as one minister put it⁸, but he conducted his ministerial relations too often on the basis of dominance or intimidation. The combination was disastrous.

The Diefenbaker cabinet structure was certainly not a "vehicle for end-of-the-line confrontations" - but instead it tended to establish more permanent confrontations (already likely because of ministerial divisions) by bringing all potential opponents and objections together earlier, more often, and with greater insistence upon actual agreement rather than merely a settlement. The Diefenbaker structure became mired in the time-consuming process of reaching consensus which St. Laurent had tried to avoid. There was, it seemed to participants⁹, an element of decisions expressing the lowest common denominator - a hazard of cabinet government insufficiently circumvented by Diefenbaker and inevitably frustrating to the stronger ministers.

The Diefenbaker structure also went some distance reacting against the St. Laurent shortcomings in coordination and collective decision-taking - yet faced its

own problems of coordination. Under St. Laurent a key difficulty had been the lack of positive, demanding overall policy direction: the Diefenbaker ministry, ironically enough, apparently went too far the other way. Ministers tried too hard to build too much into too comprehensive policy directions, as their use of the cabinet and cabinet committees suggested. Altogether, coordination under Diefenbaker almost produced immobility. Too much collective decision-taking hampered coordinated achievement as much as too little.

It seems clear that the ministry's aspirations were not matched to the personalities who made it up, or to structures upon which they depended. Other possibilities than the strong cabinet focus were not fully recognized. Cabinet committees were used more than under St. Laurent, but not a great deal more positively. Even the more general and promising of them suffered from the attempt to achieve an active, visionary and coordinated collective decision-taking, for they had too little authority or stability, too many detailed responsibilities, too little universality all together and too much in individual cases, to exercise the intermediate level of collective and coordinative decision-taking they might have done. The Committee on National Development was a notable example. More traditional bases of collective decision-taking were also weakened. The coordinating functions of the civil service were reduced

under Diefenbaker, so that (though not without reason) the civil service was not allowed to support collective decision-taking as it had done under St. Laurent. The importance to collective activities of regularly arranged cabinet procedures was appreciated but was not sufficiently advanced; the St. Laurent problems of adhocery worsened. And the possibilities of individual ministers advancing collective decision-taking by informal relationships and the circulation of documents were similarly restricted and discouraged by intention and by unintended practical divisions.

The existing cabinet structure was no longer adequate. Potential and important deficiencies under St. Laurent became real and crucial under Diefenbaker, aggravated by a cabinet's characteristics relatively little suited to the St. Laurent structure. Bottom-up policy-making was retained, but imposed upon it were aspirations for top-down policy-making unmatched by the machinery available or put in place. Flexibility of method was perhaps consciously exaggerated - as with the "ad hoc principle" of cabinet committees - beyond its limits; flexibility did become confusion. As Diefenbaker himself wrote in retrospect, "When operations become needlessly complex and burdensome, coordination breaks down and effective political control becomes difficult. We had embarked on so many new programmes and had established so

many new priorities that this state of affairs was probably inevitable. It was a situation the Cabinet sought to rectify" by appointing the Glassco Commission¹⁰, but its fruits came too late for Diefenbaker. Yet much could have been done in improving the purely internal arrangements of cabinet structure, matters beyond Glassco's scope.

PART IV:

CONCLUSIONS

XIX CONCLUSIONS

In the course of examining the workings of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures, conclusions have been drawn about each of them and comparisons made: but more general features of cabinets and Canadian government at work are also illuminated. Two broad conclusions stand out.

First of all, the two cabinet structures were markedly different: to sum up in the terms of individual responsibility and collective decision-taking which have been used, the St. Laurent cabinet structure was primarily pluralist, the Diefenbaker structure primarily collegial. They provide contrasting cases of the two broad approaches to achieving unity within cabinets' diversity, to reconciling "government by committee" and the "plural executive" in the context of politically flexible, responsible government.

Of course the distinction is not one of black and white. The Diefenbaker cabinet structure, for example, was collegial primarily in its behaviour and overall approach rather than in its machinery, which was similar to St. Laurent's. The elaboration of specifically collegial cabinet machinery on top of cabinet's collective basis awaited the Trudeau ministry (though he in turn built upon Pearson developments). Nevertheless, the St. Laurent and

Diefenbaker cabinets present contrasting pluralist and collegial approaches to balancing individual responsibility and collective decision-taking. And it is a matter of balance, not only of choice. It would be fruitless to assert one approach is necessarily better than the other: in fact they demonstrate the variety which cabinet government can contain.

On the other hand, the exploration of the two cabinets also emphasized elements which they shared. The second broad conclusion is how consistent the principles and problems of cabinet structure are even when approaches differ substantially. If the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets together are a lesson in the flexibility of cabinet government, they are also a lesson in its limits.

This contrast on a common base encourages reflections about the most effective working of cabinet structures, and about means of balancing individual responsibility and collective decision-taking in cabinet structure. Most or all of the features which are highlighted here were touched upon in the course of detailed discussions earlier, but it is useful to draw them together for the illumination they may throw upon Canadian cabinets in general.

Conclusions are drawn concerning three general issues. The first is the machinery of cabinet structure: its development and continuing problems, its formal and informal elements, and the impact upon it of individuals and

personalities. The second is how machinery can be used in terms of principles of cabinet structure: individual responsibilities which constitute the effective foundation of cabinet structure at work, and collective decision-taking which must harness and challenge the exercise of individual responsibility. The third issue is the role of the prime minister in cabinet structure: it is the prime minister who is fundamentally responsible for the machinery and the balance as well as the tone of cabinet structure.

Machinery of Cabinet Structure

Cabinet machinery is decision-making machinery. The essential problem of cabinet structure was summarized earlier¹ as the establishment and nurturing of cabinet organization and methods which encourage the reaching of political agreement by the cabinet as effectively as possible. Three points are focussed upon here which illuminate features of cabinet machinery to which attention was drawn by the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets.

- Development and Continuity in Cabinet Structure

Exploration of these two cabinet structures was not only interesting in itself and in the detail of cabinet structure thrown up by the excavation: it also serves to emphasize both the debt later cabinet structures owe to their antecedents, and the continuity of concerns despite significant changes over time. Canadian cabinet structure

is indeed "made in Canada"², but it is not made without borrowings from other countries (witness the beginnings of the Privy Council Office or Diefenbaker's attachment to British precedents) nor does it spring fully armoured from the forehead of any particular prime minister.

Subsequent, more elaborate and more self-conscious Canadian cabinet structures have roots in the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets. They substantially prepared the ground for later developments, and provided a valuable basis of experimentation. Under St. Laurent's influence, for example, the older, casual but often legalistic emphasis to which King had adhered was attenuated in favour of a stricter attitude to practical cabinet organization which would permit experimentation in cabinet structure, even if it was not encouraged. Procedures were tightened, orderliness and continuity came more to the fore. St. Laurent's "business-like" approach could also soften rules which seemed unrealistically strict at the time, as reflected in the advance notice provisions of the cabinet procedures documents mellowing from prescriptive to hortatory. The Diefenbaker government was a stimulus for structural changes because it knocked down some of the traditional habits and conventional wisdoms, and because its difficulties demonstrated and in part created an important need for structural reform.

The Privy Council Office's fundamental courses as the cabinet secretariat were set under St. Laurent and Diefenbaker, and solidified by the change of government between them. The essential elements of the "cabinet paper system" were established: agenda, memoranda to cabinet, conclusions, and records of decision. Certain specific cabinet committees which still exist were shaped or foreshadowed by St. Laurent and Diefenbaker developments - the Legislation Committee (now Legislation and House Planning), the Defence Committee (now Foreign and Defence Policy), the Economic Policy and National Development Committees (ancestors of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Development). Perhaps more important, the general attitude towards cabinet committees slowly moved away from a "negative" view towards a receptiveness of committees as positive and positively necessary elements of cabinet structure, to be regarded and planned for as extensions of the overburdened cabinet itself.

Similarly, many of the problems with which the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets coped turn out, with hindsight, to be continuing problems which can be mitigated but probably never solved. Certainly we cannot be complacent when we see twenty and thirty years ago the same problems, in essence, of achieving sufficient notice and documentation for items before they are raised, of discouraging "carry-in" items, of creeping official

attendance at cabinet committees, of ensuring ministers who should be present at committee discussions can be.

Central as well as procedural problems remain too. One, for example, is the "scylla and charybdis" to which a P.C.O. official referred in 1957³: striking the balance between a cabinet deluged with paper and one too little informed of nuances remains a real dilemma.

Another continuing problem strikes to the heart of cabinet structure. During the Diefenbaker years in particular, the cabinet's central constitutional, political and executive importance threatened its own effectiveness: its burden had to be alleviated, systematically and substantially, yet the collective authority which had to be preserved encouraged ever-greater burdens upon that authority. By 1963 one of the probably permanent dilemmas of cabinet structure was highlighted: to borrow Bagehot's terms, the cabinet's authoritative dignity threatened its practical efficiency, yet its efficiency also depended upon that authority being exercised. Many of the developments since 1963 wrestle essentially with this problem.

An additional conclusion from the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets also reflects a continuing concern. By 1963 it was becoming clear that cabinet structure itself had to be seen as a significant problem of government. At the same time that the Glassco Report, in J.R. Mallory's words, was "bringing to fruition a long pent-up urge for reform of

the structure of public administration"⁴, necessary reforms of cabinet structure which had been developing haphazardly came to the fore⁵. Ever since, cabinet structure has been a first concern of prime ministers and frequently a subject of announcements early in the life of a ministry.

- Formal and Informal Cabinet Structure

Cabinet structure is made up of more than machinery which can be announced by press release, however. It consists of formal and informal elements, reflecting as well more intangible attitudes and styles, which interact to produce the structure of the cabinet community.

Though the boundary between formal and informal structures is by no means always clear, the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cases emphasize that both elements are necessary whether cabinet structure is essentially pluralist or essentially collegial. The importance assigned by administration theory to informal organization certainly applies to such small and personal institutions as cabinets. It is not simply a matter of structures of influence but of ministerial relations generally - consultation, information exchanges, personal compatibilities. In almost every aspect of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets, from the procedures of cabinet meetings to the life of cabinet committees, informal structures could infuse life into the formal or could frustrate or be frustrated by it.

The pluralist St. Laurent cabinet structure particularly depended upon its informal elements. Yet the need for order was a consistent theme of its development, and it suffered from deficiencies in order and organization. The lack of general procedural bases for cabinet committee meetings undermined their contributions and functioning. And some of the informal elements could usefully have taken on formal ramifications: that the St. Laurent cabinet committees were made up with little or no consideration for regional balance, for example, may have contributed to the government's loss of political touch. Moreover, the dependence upon personalities consistent with the emphasis upon informal elements turned to a serious disadvantage when personal abilities to act declined. Perhaps more formal structures could have alleviated this problem.

Similarly it hardly needs restating that the Diefenbaker cabinet structure suffered from a lack of organization.

Nevertheless the collegial Diefenbaker cabinet structure tended to emphasize the formal structures which existed, especially the cabinet meeting itself. That emphasis undermined the vitality of less formal ministerial relations. The Diefenbaker case shows how collegial structure requires effective informal elements, yet may downplay them. Since collective decision-taking is so clearly expressed in the formal structure of cabinet

meetings which finally take the decisions for which all ministers are collectively responsible, and in cabinet committees supporting and extending cabinet, there is a danger in the collegial emphasis that formal structures or procedures may be multiplied to promote collective decision-taking to the point where informal cabinet structures are unduly weakened. This seems to have been one of the Diefenbaker problems even though the Diefenbaker formal structures were themselves far from adequate. A supplementary point is suggested: too much dependence upon formal structure (in this case the cabinet meeting) with insufficient attention to or actual discouragement of the informal structures may contribute to the breakdown of both. The St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets were not clearly organized enough to test the conclusion that too much formalization detracts from the degree of informal structure which any cabinet requires, but some post-mortems of the first Trudeau ministry have suggested that one consequence of its cabinet structure was to "bureaucratize" ministers in this way⁶.

The two cabinets do clearly suggest that both formal and informal structures must exist and be compatible even though not the same. It was concluded earlier that despite problems, the St. Laurent structures were compatible and in fact reinforced each other whereas the Diefenbaker structures were often in conflict. Another ingredient in

this mix is the ideas and styles of cabinet ministers, especially but not only the prime minister: the sum or difference of all ministerial approaches to the cabinet may also be a unifying or divisive force in cabinet structure. The St. Laurent cabinet structure benefited from a distinct similarity of approaches; the Diefenbaker structure suffered the reverse.

The balance of formal and informal elements in cabinet structure will of course vary between cabinets and in any ministry over time; it is impossible to prescribe one particular balance to meet all circumstances. There is certainly more to be said than strictly organizational analyses may recognize, however, for (in the words of Melville's masterpiece of literary structure) a "careful disorderliness"⁷.

- Individuals and Personalities

Both formal and informal structures also reflect the importance of individuals and personalities. That this is true whether cabinet structure is essentially pluralist or collegial, or some balance of the two, is particularly emphasized in Canada by the "federalized" cabinet. Moreover the consequences of individual attitudes or styles repeatedly affected the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures. Of course this conclusion is not unique to cabinets, nor to Canada: as D.N. Chester wrote nearly thirty years ago, "there ought to be a strong warning

against expecting too much from any particular form of government organization"⁸.

One consequence of the importance of individuals in the very practical, political and personal process of cabinet decision-making is the desirability of internal openness (itself another side to the coin of cabinet solidarity). A basic modicum of mutual trust and mutual respect for colleagues' responsibilities is essential, and in turn is promoted by an open cabinet structure. The St. Laurent case emphasizes the value of openness whereas the Diefenbaker case emphasizes the problems encouraged by diminishing it. Moreover openness is symbolized and encouraged by procedures - for example the wide circulation of cabinet conclusions which St. Laurent introduced and Diefenbaker suspended: again formal and informal elements interact. Effective notice, agenda, circulation of documents, and open ministerial attendance at committees are not merely bureaucratic formulae.

The importance of individuals is also an essential ingredient in the development and make-up of the floating inner group of ministers which every cabinet contains, as others of course have remarked⁹. This study supports that view but also emphasizes the degree to which responsibilities, especially portfolio and representative responsibilities, can play a part in establishing the inner group. Consequently, the effectiveness of an inner group

requires the participation of certain ministers who hold key responsibilities even if they otherwise might not be central personalities - the Minister of Finance for example, who so unfortunately became isolated in the Diefenbaker cabinet. In turn, the individual incumbents of key portfolios must be able to work together personally - a striking problem in the Diefenbaker cabinet. Moreover, the reality of a floating inner group in particular cabinets may be very different according to the degree to which its membership fluctuates by issues; the bases upon which the inner group ministers relate to each other; or the degree to which those ministers operate as a group rather than merely as "inner individuals", so to speak. In the Diefenbaker cabinet, for example, the membership of the inner group did not seem to fluctuate a great deal, but it was divided rather than coherent, and was dependent upon personal factors such as perceived political loyalties and approaches to policies and politics much more than was the St. Laurent inner group. The latter, on the other hand, did seem to fluctuate more according to issues but also was more coherent and accepted by all ministers.

The importance of individuals is not just a residual factor then, nor is it simply "the ghost in the machine" (though it may be that!). Cabinet structure can be seen in practical terms as a primary articulation of the scarce resources of ministerial time and ministerial

abilities. The shortage of either can scupper an otherwise beautifully planned system of decision-making, and a collegial structure such as Diefenbaker's can demand so much ministerial time that ministers rebel. Similarly, the variety of ministerial abilities, talents and characters must be suited to the working cabinet structure; it would be of little help to establish a structure which relied on a larger number of vital roles or portfolios than the number of first-rate ministers realistically available. The difficulty is compounded by the inevitably different combination of virtues and vices in any one individual. St. Laurent's cabinet structure, for example, depended on a wider distribution of first class ministers than he came to have (though he had them to begin with). On the other hand, problems with Diefenbaker's cabinet structure were aggravated by mismatching of certain portfolios and individuals.

Faced with articulating these scarce resources, an effective cabinet structure must concentrate its efforts. A structure which tries to encompass too much, to be too comprehensive and work on too many policy fronts at once, can - as the Diefenbaker experience showed - overburden itself irretrievably.

Obvious though it may seem to say so, particularly for so small an institution as the cabinet, the challenge is not to minimize the impact of personalities and individual differences upon cabinet structure but rather to take them

into account and frame the structure so as to encompass them. An essential element of cabinet structure and of prescriptions for changes in cabinet structure is, as Bryce put it in 1954, "recognition of the manifold aspects and power of personality".¹⁰

Principles of Cabinet Structure

The use and effectiveness of the machinery of cabinet structure, including "the manifold aspects...of personality", can be summarized in terms of principles of individual responsibility and collective decision-taking. These terms, as has been noted¹¹, relate to processes of decision-making in general as well to cabinet decision-making in particular. They are also useful because they emphasize that cabinet structure does not exist and work in isolation from constitutional principles of parliamentary-cabinet government even though cabinet structure is a significant problem in itself. Finally, such broad concepts have been helpful in interpreting the variety which cabinet government's flexibility permits to individual cabinets.

The balance of individual responsibility and collective decision-taking can express the essential dynamics of cabinets at work, and can be used in assessing cabinet structures. Though the contrast between collegial and pluralist approaches to this balance emerged from the workings of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet

structures as well as from less concrete reflections, the key is not in categorization but in each cabinet's balance, and in the way each cabinet suits its balancing to the individuals who make it up and the circumstances it faces.

It is possible and useful, however, to draw some general conclusions about the elements of this balancing and about ways in which the individual-collective balance can be sought. While several points will be made about, in turn, individual responsibility, collective decision-taking, and ways in which they are combined, a primary theme emerges from considering the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cases: effective cabinet structure finally depends upon an effective foundation of individual ministerial responsibilities, though they also require collective decision-taking to harness and challenge them. If "the cabinet is the powerhouse of the entire governmental system"¹², within cabinet structure individual ministerial responsibilities are the cabinet's driving forces.

- Individual Responsibility

Both the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets depended upon individual responsibilities to drive them. By and large St. Laurent fostered ministers' scope to exercise their responsibilities whereas Diefenbaker concentrated upon melding responsibilities. In both the most important axes of cabinet workings were ministers' portfolio and regional representative responsibilities.

Of the two, portfolio responsibility was particularly emphasized in the St. Laurent cabinet structure. Portfolio responsibility encompasses not only a minister's department but also advancing the portfolio's constituency or clientele (which can lead to creation of a new portfolio, such as forestry, out of a larger conglomeration). The portfolio structure (including who fills each portfolio) may be a factor in generating as well as reflecting the directions of a government - as witness Hamilton's tenure first in Northern Affairs and National Resources and then in Agriculture (although 1948-1963 was not yet a time of frequent portfolio reorganizations). Of course, as Hodgetts' valuable work emphasizes, there is no one best portfolio rationale or portfolio structure¹³.

A minister's responsibility for regional representation, and its place in cabinet structure, hardly need emphasis by now. The significance of this responsibility can vary, as comparing St. Laurent's and Diefenbaker's respective approaches suggests, but it is important that regional representation politically cross-cuts the portfolio structure. It therefore complements and modifies one relatively more formal individual emphasis with another less formal. It would seem that in Canada effective individual responsibility implies fostering the informal structure's connections with the formal. That this is not a simple equation is suggested by the fact that it was Diefenbaker

who emphasized regional responsibilities and began more consciously to balance committee membership accordingly, and St. Laurent who tended to separate the political and representative from governmental portfolio responsibilities.

But the importance of individual responsibility was not only a reflection of the cabinet's diversity of portfolio and representative responsibilities - though it is that. While this study has not tried to trace the practices and meanings of individual and collective responsibility to parliament, it does suggest that their parallels within cabinet structure have their own validity and do not reflect only the constitutional relationship. Political realities and demands which are focussed through ministers' and the cabinet's responsibility to parliament certainly justify and reinforce responsibilities within cabinet structure, but similarly responsibility to parliament after cabinet's decisions are taken reflects also the cabinet's operations preceeding the final decision. For example, the meaning of ministerial answerability and advocacy to parliament in the St. Laurent years was strengthened because the policies a minister was defending were especially likely to have reflected his own initiative and views rather than a collectively formulated policy.

An emphasis on individual responsibility within the cabinet also gives scope for the individual initiative upon which a cabinet's dynamism and creativity largely

depend. This is particularly so when, as in Canada, party organizations do not effectively establish priorities and policies for a cabinet. The St. Laurent cabinet structure promoted and depended upon this individual driving force for good and bad. Ironically enough, the Diefenbaker cabinet probably generated more new ideas yet its cabinet structure contributed to frustrating them by its brand of collegial emphasis.

It would be a grave mistake, then, to see ministers' role as primarily managing their departments in accordance with policy handed out to them by the cabinet. There is no such simple separation of policy and administration, anyway. As Friedrich wrote years ago, "The concrete patterns of public-policy formation and execution reveal that politics and administration are not two mutually exclusive boxes, or absolute distinctions, but that they are two closely linked aspects of the same process. Public policy...is a continuous process, the formation of which is inseparable from its execution"¹⁴.

But individual responsibility is definitely not without problems. There is no substitute for ministers exercising their responsibilities. A department can be a power behind the ministerial throne, but the cabinet system does not provide for the possibility of the political initiative shifting from ministers and cabinet to other powerful loci as, in the United States, it may shift among

(and be struggled for by) department heads, the White House and congressional centres. An emphasis on individual responsibilities may be self-defeating where individuals do not perform as expected - as happened at the end of the St. Laurent years. The same emphasis may permit a few ministers to go too far beyond their colleagues or become too dominant, as may also have tended to occur under St. Laurent, although disparities are inevitable. Some individual responsibilities are opposed; this opposition may be compounded by other factors (as in Fleming's tenure at Finance), so that an emphasis on individual responsibility could be divisive even to the point where collective solidarity can no longer contain the contending parties. Another problem is that "bottom-up" policy-making can predominate at the expense of overall planning and priority setting. These dangers may be multiplied by increased governmental complexity and size.

- Collective Decision-Taking

If individual responsibility is a driving force, then, it must be harnessed and directed as well as encouraged and challenged by collective decision-taking. Individual responsibilities must be concerted. The cabinet is a committee as well as a plural executive, and increasingly it was and it is a committee extended by sub-committees as well as supporting secretariats and procedures. Constitutional collective responsibility demands

continuous efforts for unity; the internal structural dimension of collective responsibility is collective decision-taking¹⁵. The degree and methods of collective decision-taking may vary greatly, however - as the different St. Laurent and Diefenbaker approaches showed - so that it is not merely an abstract principle but a practical dimension of cabinet structure, not merely a pole but a continuum.

Collective responsibility within the cabinet is obviously implemented through structures such as cabinet committees and central agencies. But it is also expressed in personal terms as the responsibility of each minister to his colleagues, chief among them the prime minister, and not only as a firmly sanctioned collective solidarity after decisions are taken. The rationale is constitutional but also human, and not unique to cabinets. Its dynamic is forcefully expressed in a few Solzhenitsyn lines about a prison camp:

"That's why they'd dreamed up these gangs...to make the prisoners keep each other on their toes. So the fellows at the top don't have to worry. It was like this - either you all got something extra or you all starved. ('You're not pulling your weight, you swine, and I've got to go hungry because of you. So work, you bastard!')"¹⁶.

Collective responsibility within the cabinet is not only a constraint, then, but ideally should contribute a security, confidence and challenge conducive to effective

individual responsibility. It should not only restrain the potential problems of individual responsibility but should promote strategic thinking about directions the cabinet as a whole should share, and the coordination, consultation and cooperation in which ministers have a mutual interest.

But collective decision-taking involves potential problems too. The Diefenbaker structure's collegial emphasis suggests that, if it is taken too far, there is a real danger of immobility or at least slowness. Another potential problem is decisions which tend to express a lowest common denominator - which some Diefenbaker ministers also recalled¹⁷. Solidarity and an insistence upon collective decision-making as far as possible also put a great deal of pressure upon ministers who naturally have differing opinions; a collective emphasis may from this point of view actually encourage dissension or make reconciliation more rather than less difficult - precisely one of the contributing factors to the pressure-cooker atmosphere of the later Diefenbaker cabinet. Relieving tactics such as the unattributed leak¹⁸ only spurred Diefenbaker to increase the pressure. Ironically, too, because one of the advantages of collective decision-taking is that it is supposed to encourage or at least permit strategic thinking, one of its potential problems (as Diefenbaker discovered) is a self-defeating over-emphasis upon trying to construct all-embracing, "top-down" policy

frameworks. A search for perfection may drive out mere excellence. Thus frustrations of collective decision-taking within the Diefenbaker cabinet contributed to the break-up of its solidarity.

- Combining Individual Responsibility and Collective Decision-Taking

Though the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures emerge as examples of two distinct approaches, they also emphasize the details and complexities of cabinet structure and warn against applying ideas of individual responsibility and collective decision-taking as a dichotomy. They must be combined and balanced. Moreover one of the lessons of exploring and comparing the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker structures from this perspective is that the combination of diversity with unity through collective decision-taking can and should be promoted in a variety of ways both formal and informal. A variety of means may be particularly important in Canada where, as discussed in Chapter I¹⁹, so many matters are assigned to collective rather than individual ministerial decision.

The cabinet meeting itself is of course the central institution and forum of collective decision-taking. This was especially the case in the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker years, but it was also the core around which a larger cabinet organization was developing. That the cabinet's own organization must be a first priority was a

clear lesson of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker ministries. Under St. Laurent in particular the procedural bases of a more coherent and efficient cabinet structure were stabilized and clarified, even if not rigorously implemented. Though the mould was cracked under Diefenbaker, that reinforced the lesson of basic procedures too easily taken for granted. By 1963 it was evident that other means of collective decision-taking had to be developed further, while maintaining the cabinet's final authority. Growing cabinet size and other pressures had contributed to diminishing the cabinet's ability to act, but increased size also seemed to encourage more emphasis on collective decision-taking and coordination rather than less.

The primary organizational means of meeting the burden upon the cabinet was and remains the cabinet committee system. By 1963 cabinet committees were firmly established as essential ongoing elements of collective decision-taking. The core committees were indispensable, and the Cabinet Defence Committee set a pattern for later more elaborate and complete use of committees. The cabinet committee system had progressed well beyond almost entirely ad hoc arrangements even though they remained characteristic. Later developments were foreshadowed by, for example, the failed Committee on Economic Policy, by proposals for an executive committee of the cabinet which gained some currency during the Diefenbaker years, and by

consideration of a system of cabinet committees embracing those subjects "to which the cabinet has devoted a considerable amount of time" and of permitting cabinet committees, as in Britain, "to dispose of matters with finality"²⁰.

Then as (but less than) now, in Doern's words, "The committee process has resulted in a considerable amount of decentralization in that the committees have taken on de facto decision-making roles in areas of decision-making which in early periods of Canadian cabinet government would have been decided by the full cabinet"²¹. What this study also suggests, however, bearing both individual and collective responsibilities in mind, is that cabinet committees should also be seen as a means of centralization. Whichever character they exhibit, cabinet committees are essentially means of collective decision-taking which encompass the expression of, but do not themselves express individual responsibilities.

Another means supporting collective decision-taking is the cabinet secretariat providing an essential basic coordination of cabinet activities. Although the scale of P.C.O. operations and the scale of government over 1948 to 1963 were much smaller than today, the similarity of many of P.C.O.'s objectives, problems and concerns is striking. Similarly the principles and norms of P.C.O. behaviour are in general familiar. The P.C.O.'s continuing

duality of roles, as cabinet's secretariat and as the prime minister's department, was also evident. Though the two aspects are inseparable, an emphasis on one or the other can be a key characteristic of P.C.O.'s functioning.

The senior civil service support structures of interdepartmental committees and less formal relationships also assist collective decision-taking. Indeed the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cases show in different ways how effective cabinet structures can depend upon senior public service support. The St. Laurent cabinet probably relied too much upon this support, but it did play a considerable part in permitting that ministry's relatively loosely-knit and pluralist decision-making. Although, on the other hand, the breaking up of this support structure to some extent was probably a valuable contribution of the Diefenbaker ministry, nevertheless its lack was a factor in that ministry's inability to carry through a more collegial approach successfully.

The portfolio structure is also an important means towards collective decision-taking. Certain portfolios in particular have coordinating responsibilities on behalf of the ministry as a whole - whether considered as horizontal portfolios, as central agencies, or in terms of those ministers to whom others must come in order to carry through their own responsibilities. Some instances from the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures, such as Alvin

Hamilton's role or Howe's, suggest that other portfolios can also play roles which have something of the same effect in practice or as part of the informal cabinet structure. The distinction between central agencies and line departments, or between horizontal and vertical portfolios, might be seen less as a formal difference in kind and more as a continuum compounded of formal and informal elements. In addition, where the portfolio structure is arranged so that certain portfolios relate to or even conflict with others, their necessary interaction is also a means towards collective decision-taking - Defence with External Affairs for example, or Northern Affairs and National Resources with several resource departments in the Diefenbaker cabinet, or Agriculture with the portfolio to which is attached the Wheat Board.

Several processes which bring ministers together towards collective or collectively accepted decisions are absolutely essential. They include establishing the expenditure budget (the estimates), the speech from the throne, the legislative programme, and even the Minister of Finance's budget which is traditionally his own (with the prime minister) but which, at least in the Diefenbaker cabinet, could more or less informally be made subject to wider ministerial contributions. Of course, these processes are oriented by and flow through other collective decision-taking means, particularly the cabinet, cabinet committees

such as the Treasury Board and the Legislation Committee, and the key "horizontal" portfolios.

Similarly related to other means is the circulation of papers and documents, which may be seen as a means in itself. Nowadays it is called the cabinet paper system²². It was an important basis of consultation and of reaching agreements in both the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinets. It was particularly emphasized under St. Laurent, by the P.C.O. and because, as one minister said, ministers "must know what other ministers are proposing"²³. The Diefenbaker cabinet made less effective use of this means.

This study has already emphasized the structure of ministerial relations as another means towards collective decision-taking, including all its various aspects from informal meetings or conversations to floating inner groups playing their part. Emphasis on ministerial relations also, in part, puts the burden of collective decision-taking upon each minister on his own. That is, each minister is expected to recognize and take account of the points of view of his colleagues, to "internalize" them, rather than to approach the formal arenas of the collective decision-taking process in a purely combative way. Internal openness and the cabinet paper system are essential. This means also depends upon the significance of Friedrich's "rule of anticipated reactions"²⁴. The St. Laurent cabinet structure demonstrates this approach is not unrealistic (though it

could certainly not be relied upon by itself), but an increasing emphasis upon formal structures of collective decision-taking may tend to weaken the perception by ministers of this means, reinforcing the burden upon the formal structures and further weakening the informal cooperative structures.

Finally, a body of more or less shared ideas amongst ministers may also support easier reaching of collective decisions. In the St. Laurent cabinet a shared approach and style was of great assistance. The Diefenbaker cabinet's troubles emphasize the difficulty in Canada of achieving an overarching shared perspective among chief figures of "supermarket" parties. On the other hand, shared approaches can be promoted by facing the mutual enemies of competing parties or, as outstandingly in St. Laurent's cabinet, by long-shared experience. Peter Self emphasizes the "coordination by ideas" which "plays a crucial part in public administration" and is so important as one of the "other factors besides formal structure [which] hold an organization together and enable it to work harmoniously"²⁵.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive summary of means toward combining individual responsibility and collective decision-taking: but cabinet structure includes and associates all these elements. The St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures had quite different emphases,

but their effectiveness was related to the success with which they put their structural eggs in several baskets.

The Prime Minister in Cabinet Structure

The prime minister is the essential combining agent. He is primarily responsible for cabinet's machinery and for the balance of the principles of cabinet structure which emerges from its workings. The long-standing emphasis on the prime minister's strong position in both Canadian and British literature is quite in accord with the workings of the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker cabinet structures. On this basis, it is impossible to imagine a politically or governmentally successful cabinet without an effective prime minister, although every prime minister will do his job very differently.

A focus on prime ministerial powers or prerogatives, however, whether concluding with support for or opposition to the idea of prime ministerial government, is only part of the problem. The prime minister's powers reflect his responsibilities. If the dependence of ministers upon the performance of Prime Ministers St. Laurent and Diefenbaker was striking, so too were the difficulties and demands of the prime minister's position in relation to his colleagues.

Within the cabinet, speaking broadly, the prime minister's first responsibility is to maintain the cabinet

in effective being. This requires, as this study has emphasized, not only achieving and maintaining collective solidarity in "unity of action and utterance"²⁶, but also doing so while sustaining a complex web of individual responsibilities and collective decision-taking expressed through formal and informal structures, through machinery and personal relationships. As one P.C.O. publication puts it, the prime minister is "the principal architect of unity within the ministry" as one of the key "elements that make possible the cabinet, which exists to bring together the individual responsibilities of ministers so that they may be exercised by each minister in a manner that is acceptable to all ministers"²⁷. Fulfilling this responsibility has an additional complexity in Canada where regional representational responsibilities cross-cutting portfolios may enhance ministers' status while reinforcing the need for prime ministerial strength at the centre of cabinet structure. Yet a prime minister's strength does not serve his own best interests if it involves diminishing other ministers, as Diefenbaker's case suggests.

In addition the prime minister is responsible for leading the cabinet. This need not imply developing or imposing programmatic priorities, but it does require an awareness of overall directions. It requires in particular a prime ministerial ability to develop in himself and foster in others an overview of the whole, and a capacity to impart

an energy to the work of the cabinet. The twin abilities to discipline and to inspire a cabinet²⁸ are invaluable.

Although St. Laurent, for example, saw no need to develop higher priorities, one of his great virtues, while healthy, was his ability to get things moving.

The prime minister is a vital part of the cabinet's structure, and structure must be a vital concern of his if he is to fulfill his responsibilities. His concern for structure encompasses both the formal and the informal, and the distribution, content, allocation and interrelationships of individual responsibilities as well as the various means for achieving and maintaining collective decision-taking. The prime minister's powers over cabinet structure and the organization of the government as a whole, when most effective, are exercised in line with this rationale and not merely in terms of power-broking for its own sake. This does not imply continual readjustment of structures or one overall structural plan. It does imply a conscious regard for effective cabinet structure. Neither St. Laurent nor Diefenbaker was an "organization man", but St. Laurent had a distinctive view of the cabinet structure he liked whereas Diefenbaker tended to believe that cabinet structure would "just grow like Topsy".²⁹

The prime minister's responsibilities for structure also extend to the personnel who work it - indeed his daily view of its workings is often cast in personal terms. His

continuous structural role is in part a matter of personnel relations, reflecting the importance of individuals and personalities. This is no light or unimportant duty - compare St. Laurent's and Diefenbaker's success. In the longer run it calls for a careful and sustained policy of recruitment and training. The prime minister's essential skills as cabinet-maker support his responsibility for cabinet structure, and their application extends beyond occasions when a ministry is formed or re-formed.

Whether cabinet structure works in "careful disorderliness" or not, the prime minister needs to have an underlying appreciation of and a general strategy for his cabinet structure.

A prime minister is concerned with a great range of issues and problems outside as well as inside the cabinet, of course. He must devote huge amounts of time to substantive political and policy developments, to policy leadership and partisan affairs, even to ceremonial and symbolic functions: often they are all interrelated. But he cannot for long lose track of his continuing underlying responsibilities for maintaining the cabinet in effective being, for leading its overall progress, and for its structure. Any prime minister can of course concentrate on these responsibilities to a different degree from other prime ministers, and take a different approach to them. He may emphasize cabinet's diversity or its unity, or a

pluralist or collegial approach: but he must work at maintaining a balance between them.

From this perspective of the prime minister's position in cabinet structure, his powers and prerogatives flow from his responsibilities, from the cabinet's need for someone to exercise those responsibilities, as well as from historical political and constitutional developments and from a prime minister's own political achievements. For a prime minister, a sense of his place in the play of individual responsibilities and collective decision-taking is very important to the effective exercise of his powers. The prime minister is in a much stronger position than his colleagues, so strong that he is extraordinarily difficult to topple (as Diefenbaker's disaffected ministers discovered), but he must continuously harbour and use enough of his strength to ensure his responsibilities in cabinet structure are met. If they are not, the whole cabinet suffers, and (as Diefenbaker also discovered) the prime minister is probably more tied by reputation to his cabinet's success than are individual cabinet ministers. It is the prime minister's cabinet: but he is the cabinet's prime minister.

FOOTNOTES

I CABINET GOVERNMENT AND CANADIAN CABINETS

1. David Butler, The Canberra Model (Melbourne, 1973), p. 7. For a discussion of the Westminster model as a contemporary myth, see J. Mackintosh, The Government and Politics of Britain (4th edition, London, 1977), chapters I-II.
2. Of many references, compare for example R. Rose, Politics in England Today (London, 1974), p. 67; K.C. Wheare, Modern Constitutions (London, 1951), chapter VIII; I. Jennings, Cabinet Government (3rd edition, Cambridge, 1959), chapter I; G. Marshall, G.C. Moodie, Some Problems of the Constitution (4th edition, London, 1967); L.S. Amery, Thoughts on the Constitution (2nd edition, Oxford, 1953), chapter I; N. Johnson, In Search of the Constitution (Toronto, 1977), especially chapter 3; and A.D.P. Heeney, "Cabinet Government in Canada: Some Recent Developments in the Machinery of the Central Executive", C.J.E.P.S., 1946 (p. 282).
3. See R.M. Dawson, The Government of Canada (5th edition revised by N. Ward, Toronto, 1970), pp. 57-75; R.I. Cheffins, The Constitutional Process in Canada (2nd edition, Toronto, 1976), chapter I and passim; P. Hogg, Constitutional Law of Canada (Toronto, 1977), p. 1-5.
4. Which is not to say impossible: the principles and institutions of cabinet government are set down to varying degrees in different countries. E.g. a plea for codifying the Crown's reserve powers in H.D. Evatt, The King and his Dominion Governors (2nd edition, London, 1967).
5. A.H. Birch, Representative and Responsible Government (Toronto, 1964), pp. 17-21 and passim.
6. The essentials are generally agreed even though assessments may differ widely. Some succinctly useful descriptions are in texts of broad scope, e.g. C.J. Friedrich, Constitutional Government and Democracy (Revised edition, New York, 1950), pp. 362-8; H. Finer, The Theory and Practice of Modern Government, (4th edition, London, 1961) pp. 576-7; S.E. Finer, Comparative Government (London, 1970) pp. 146-8 et seq.

7. K.C. Wheare, Government by Committee (Oxford, 1955).
8. J. Heclo, A. Wildavsky, The Private Government of Public Money (Berkeley, 1974).
9. An oft-used concept first described this way by B. Crick, The Reform of Parliament (New York edition, 1965), p. 26.
10. Sir William Armstrong, "The Civil Service and its Tasks", in R. Chapman, A. Dunsire (eds), Style in Administration (London, 1971). p. 318.
11. Private Government, pp. xiv-xv.
12. G.W. Jones, "Development of the Cabinet", in W. Thornhill (ed), The Modernization of British Government (London, 1975), pp. 48 and 40.
13. A. Hamilton, J. Madison, J. Jay, The Federalist (Everyman's Library edition, London, 1970), #LXX, pp. 357-64.
14. A discussion of Canadian literature follows in section 2 of this chapter; also see R. French, "The Privy Council Office: Support for Cabinet Decision-making", in R. Schultz et al (eds), The Canadian Political Process (3rd edition, Toronto, 1979), especially pp. 363-7 and 386-9.
15. Ibid, p. 386. Even since French wrote two new central agencies of coordination have begun work (the Ministries of State for Economic Development and Social Development).
16. One analysis is in Privy Council Office, Submissions to the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability, #1: "Responsibility in the Constitution, Part I: Departmental Structures" (Ottawa, 1979).
17. Canberra Model, pp. 49 and 57.
18. See Marshall and Moodie, Some Problems, p. 41 et seq.
19. P. Self, Administrative Theories and Politics (Toronto, 1973), p. 21.
20. A particularly fascinating discussion is still R. Neustadt, Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership with Reflections on Johnson and Nixon (New York, 1976).

21. Ministers' responsibility to the prime minister is touched on in various studies, e.g. Dawson, Government of Canada, p. 174; Rose, Politics in England, p. 114; J.R. Mallory, The Structure of Canadian Government (Toronto, 1971), p. 69. For an extended discussion of another view of ministerial responsibility, which does not see its essence in responsibility to parliament, see N. Johnson, In Search, pp. 83-4 and passim.
22. P.C.O., Submissions, #4: "The Functioning of the Privy Council Office", p. 3.
23. J.E. Hodgetts, The Canadian Public Service: A Physiology of Government 1867-1970 (Toronto, 1973), p. 349.
24. Finer, Comparative Government, p. 172.
25. W.E. Moore, The Conduct of the Corporation (New York, 1962), p. 82.
26. Dawson, Government of Canada, p. 185.
27. See e.g. Prime Minister's Office, transcript of Prime Minister's press conference 20 December 1974; M. Sharp, "Decision-making in the Federal Cabinet", C.P.A., 1976 (p. 1); G. Radwanski, Trudeau (Toronto, 1978), pp. 235-310.
28. C.I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 136.
29. C-20-7: Notes for speech to the National Defence College by R.B. Bryce, 3 September 1954.
30. R.H.S. Crossman, Inside View (London, 1972), p. 68.
31. Ibid, p. 8.
32. Submissions, #4: "P.C.O.", pp. 9 and 25. Others who note the prime minister's responsibility for the machinery of government include Crossman, Inside View, pp. 63-8; and J.P. Mackintosh, The British Cabinet (3rd edition, London, 1977), pp. 441-3; S.A. de Smith, Constitutional Government and Administrative Law (3rd edition, Harmondsworth, 1977), p. 153.
33. Amery, Thoughts on the Constitution, p. 70; also see T. Hockin, Government in Canada (New York, 1975), p. 7.
34. Comparative Government, p. 170.

35. An interesting look at effects of prime ministerial styles on policy-making organization, focussing upon Trudeau, is G.B. Doern, "Recent Changes in the Philosophy of Policy-making in Canada", C.J.P.S., 1971 (p. 243).
36. As well as fewer in number, Canadian studies present nothing so substantial along these lines as Jennings, Cabinet Government; Mackintosh, the British Cabinet; or H. Daalder, Cabinet Reform in Britain 1914-1963 (Stanford, 1963). There are certainly, however, Canadian works which do take an historical approach, e.g. W.A. Matheson, The Prime Minister and the Cabinet (Toronto, 1976); R.M. Punnett, The Prime Minister in Canadian Government and Politics (Toronto, 1977); and, as texts, Dawson, Government of Canada, and Mallory, Structure.
37. For example, Matheson looks at the prime minister in particular and uses consociational concepts; Punnett is primarily concerned with prime ministerial power; and both tend to emphasize the Trudeau years, as Doern does in "Recent Changes in the Philosophy of Policy-making" even though he looks as well at Diefenbaker and Pearson.
38. See, e.g., R. Whitaker, "'Confused Alarms of Struggle and Flight'; English-Canadian Political Science in the 1970s", Canadian Historical Review, 1979 (p. 1); also R. VanLoon, Whittington, The Canadian Political System: Environment, Structure and Process (1st edition, Toronto, 1971). "Postscript".
39. For an alternative grouping of observers (in the context of the P.C.O. and the Trudeau reforms) as "theorists" and "pragmatists", see French, "The P.C.O.", pp. 388-9.
40. E.g., R. Whitaker, The Government Party: Organizing and Financing the Liberal Party of Canada 1930-58 (Toronto, 1977); R.J. Jackson, M. Atkinson, The Canadian Legislative System (Toronto, 1974); R. Simeon, Federal-Provincial Diplomacy (Toronto, 1972); G. Veilleux, Les relations intergouvernementales au Canada 1867-1967 (Montreal, 1971); P. Pross (ed), Pressure Group Behaviour in Canadian Politics, (Toronto, 1975); J. Meisel, Working Papers on Canadian Politics (2nd edition, Montreal, 1975); B. Thordarson, Trudeau and Foreign Policy: A Study in Decision-making (Toronto, 1972); J. Eayrs, The Art of the Possible: Government and Foreign Policy in Canada (Toronto, 1961), and In Defence of Canada (4 volumes, Toronto, 1964, 1965, 1972, 1979); D. Thomson, Louis St. Laurent: Canadian (Toronto, 1967).

41. E.g. Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, pp. 238-9; also see Punnett, Prime Minister, p. 79; Butler, Canberra Model, p. 58.
42. Van Loon and Whittington, Canadian Political System (1st edition 1971, 2nd edition 1975).
43. For an interesting brief note on the Canadian tradition of constitutional writing see J.R. Mallory's review of Hogg, Constitutional Law of Canada, in C.P.A., 1979, pp. 473-76. For an example, see former Prime Minister R.L. Borden's Canadian Constitutional Studies (Revised edition, Toronto, 1923). There are exceptions to this tradition, of course. For the recent legislative proposals see The Constitutional Amendment Bill; tabled as Bill C-60, June 1978, and mimeographed critiques by David Kwavnick (Department of Political Science, Carleton University, Ottawa, July 1978) and prepared for Senator Eugene Forsey by an unnamed constitutional lawyer (July, 1978).
44. Such as Dawson, Government of Canada, pp. 193-217; Mallory, Structure, p. 96. A debt is often owed to the Haldane report (Great Britain, The Report of the Machinery of Government Committee, MD 9230, London, 1918).
45. E.g. L. Dobuzinskis, "Rational Policy-making: Policy, Politics and Political Science", in T. Hockin (ed), Apex of Power: The Prime Minister and Political Leadership in Canada (2nd edition, Scarborough, 1977); G. Szablowski, "The Optimal Policy-making System: Implications for the Canadian Political Process", in *ibid*; G.B. Doern and P. Aucoin, "Public Policy Organization, Process, and Management: Concluding Observations", in Doern and Aucoin (eds), Public Policy in Canada (Toronto, 1979).
46. E.g. Hockin, Government in Canada, chapter 5; Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, chapter XI.
47. E.g. essays in T. Hockin (ed), Apex of Power; Punnett, Prime Minister.
48. Punnett, Prime Minister, p. 5.
49. *Ibid*, p. 86.
50. E.g. N.M. Rogers, "Federal Influences on the Canadian Cabinet", Canadian Bar Review, 1933 (#2: p. 103); R.M. Dawson, "The Cabinet, Position and Personnel", C.J.E.P.S., 1946 (p. 261); J.R. Mallory, "Cabinet Government in Canada", Political Studies, 1954 (p. 142); F.W. Gibson (ed), Cabinet Formation and Bicultural Relations (Ottawa, 1970).

51. E.g. J. Porter, The Vertical Mosaic (Toronto, 1965), pp. 386-416; R. Van Loon, The Structure and Membership of the Canadian Cabinet, an internal research project of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Ottawa, 1966); Van Loon and Whittington, Canadian Political System, pp. 312-335; J. de Denus, Les ministres canadiens-français du Québec à Ottawa de 1948-1968 (Rouyn-Noranda, 1974); Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, chapter V.
52. See K. McRae (ed), Consociational Democracy (Toronto, 1974), and Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet.
53. This is not to say "inside-dopsterism" should be eschewed: it is absolutely necessary, but its hazards are shown in different ways by W. Stewart, Shrug: Trudeau in Power (Toronto, 1971); P. Newman, The Distemper of Our Times (Toronto, 1968); and C. Campbell, G. Szablowski, The Superbureaucrats: Structure and Behaviour in Central Agencies (Toronto, 1979).
54. French, "P.C.O.", p. 388. French cites himself and, e.g., D. Hartle, The Expenditure Budget Process in the Government of Canada (Toronto, 1978); M.J. Kirby and H.V. Kroeker, "The Politics of Crisis Management in Government: Does Planning Make any Difference?" in C.F. Smart and W.T. Stanbury (eds), Studies in Crisis Management (Montreal, 1978).
55. E.g. A. Brady, Democracy in the Dominions (3rd edition, Toronto, 1958), pp. 84-5; N.M. Rogers, "Evolution and Reform of the Canadian Cabinet", Canadian Bar Review, 1933 (#4: p. 227) passim; Dawson, Government, p. 226; A.D.P. Heeney, "Mackenzie King and the Cabinet Secretariat", C.P.A., 1967 (p. 366), passim; Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, pp. 233-35.
56. E.g. Sir George Murray, Report on the Organization of the Public Service of Canada (Ottawa, 1912), passim; Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization (Glassco Commission), 5 volumes (Ottawa, 1962-3), esp. vol. 5: pp. 76-9; Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability (Lambert Commission) (Ottawa, 1979), esp. pp. 61-171. The different senses of "efficiency" were not always noted, unfortunately; see A.W. Johnson, "Efficiency in Government and Business", C.P.A., 1963 (p. 245) (later plagiarized in W.D. McKeough, "The Relations of Ministers and Civil Servants", C.P.A., 1969 (p. 1).

57. See Hodgetts, Canadian Public Service; G.B. Doern, "Horizontal and Vertical Portfolios in Government", in Doern and V.S. Wilson (eds), Issues in Canadian Public Policy, (Toronto, 1974), pp. 310-336; and Doern, "The Cabinet and Central Agencies", in Doern and Aucoin (eds), Public Policy in Canada, pp. 27-61.
58. See Doern, "Horizontal and Vertical", and "Cabinet and Central Agencies"; P. Aucoin, "Portfolio Structures and Policy Coordination", in Doern and Aucoin, Public Policy, pp. 213-238; H.L. Laframboise, "Portfolio Structure and a Ministry System: A Model for the Canadian Federal Service", Optimum, 1971 (1: p. 29); P. Aucoin and R. French, Knowledge, Power and Public Policy (Ottawa, 1974).
59. E.g. Doern and Aucoin, Public Policy; Doern and Wilson, Issues; the publications of the Institute for Research on Public Policy, and the learned journal, Canadian Public Policy; R. Simeon, "Studying Public Policy", C.J.P.S., 1976 (p. 548).
60. Public Policy in Canada, pp. xiii, and xiv-xv.
61. For literature on the Trudeau committee system see French, "P.C.O.", fn. #8; main articles by civil servants include P.M. Pitfield, "The Shape of Government in the 1980s: Techniques and Instruments for Policy Formulation at the Federal Level", C.P.A., 1976 (p. 8); A.W. Johnson, "The Treasury Board and the Machinery of Government in the 1970s", C.J.P.S., 1971 (p. 346); R.G. Robertson, "The Changing Role of the Privy Council Office", C.P.A., 1971 (p. 487); and (by a political appointee) M. Lalonde, "The Changing Role of the Prime Minister's Office", C.P.A., 1971 (p. 509).
62. G. Sartori, "Will Democracy Kill Democracy? Decision-making by Majorities and by Committees", Government and Opposition, 1975 (p. 131); B. Headey, British Cabinet Ministers (London, 1973).
63. House of Commons Debates, 4 February 1960, p. 756.
64. E.g. the articles cited in fn. #61 above; Organization of the Government of Canada (Ottawa, published annually); Canada Year Book (Ottawa, published annually); Press releases by Prime Ministers Pearson, (20 January 1964), Trudeau (April 30, 1968; also press conference of same day), Clark (4 June 1979).

65. A notable example, unfortunately, is J.G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker, I: The Crusading Years 1895-1956; II: The Years of Achievement 1956-1962; III: The Tumultuous Years 1962-67 (Toronto, 1975, 1976, 1977).
66. Such as Amery, Thoughts on the Constitution; P. Gordon Walker, The Cabinet (Revised edition, London, 1972); Crossman, Inside View; H. Morrison, Government and Parliament (Oxford, 1954); I. Gilmour, The Body Politic (2nd edition, London, 1971); H. Wilson, The Governance of Britain (London, 1976). Some Canadian articles exist in this category, e.g. J.W. Pickersgill, "Responsible Government in a Federal State", C.P.A., 1972 (p. 520); Sharp, "Decision-making"; M. Lamontagne, "The Influence of the Politician", C.P.A., 1968 (p. 263).
67. Two of the most interesting are by P. Newman: Distemper of Our Times, and Renegade in Power (Toronto, 1963).
68. E.g. Robertson, "Changing Role"; Pitfield, "Shape of Government"; Lambert Commission; various articles, for instance those in Doern and Aucoin, Public Policy, and Hockin, Apex of Power.
69. Doern, "Cabinet and Central Agencies", p. 52. Also compare A.W. Johnson, "Management Theory and Cabinet Government", C.P.A., 1971 (p. 73), and "Public Policy: Creativity and the Bureaucracy", C.P.A., 1978 (p. 1).
70. E.g. Punnett, Prime Minister, p. 73; Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 85; F. Schindeler, "The Prime Minister and the Cabinet: History and Development", in Hockin (ed), Apex of Power, p. 42.
71. E.g. Robertson, "Changing Role"; Pitfield, "Shape of Government"; Sharp, "Decision-making": this is not to say the changes themselves were wrong.
72. Matheson's assessment of the Trudeau cabinet, for example, even though the general tenor of the book is even-handed and thoughtful.
73. The abstract outlined the documentary and interview evidence used here; the Bibliography and Footnotes expand upon it.
74. Memoirs include those of J.W. Pickersgill, My Years with Louis St. Laurent: A Political Memoir (Toronto, 1975); A.D.P. Heeney, The Things that are Caesar's (Toronto, 1972); L.B. Pearson, Mike: The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson (editors, J.A. Munro, A.I. Inglis), I:

- 1897-1948 (Toronto, 1972), II: 1948-1957 (Toronto: 1973), III: 1957-1968 (Toronto, 1975); J.G. Diefenbaker, One Canada; P. Sevigny, This Game of Politics (Toronto, 1965). More or less contemporary accounts include the two books by P. Newman; P. Dempson, Assignment Ottawa (Toronto, 1968); P. Nicholson, Vision and Indecision (Don Mills, 1968); J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, The Mackenzie King Record, IV: 1947-48 (Toronto, 1970), and earlier volumes; P. Stursberg (ed), Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained 1956-62 (Toronto, 1975), and Diefenbaker: Leadership Lost 1962-67 (Toronto, 1976).
75. On this sharing and its degrees, general discussions are in Mallory, Structure, chapter I and passim; Hodgetts, Canadian Public Service, pp. 43-58. Also see Hogg, Constitutional Law, chapter I and passim.
76. For example, the Haldane Report was followed by Senate of Canada, Report of the Special Committee on Machinery of Government (J.S. McLennan, chairman), Ottawa, 1919. Today comparisons are made to learn more than to imitate.
77. E.g. French, "P.C.O.", p. 386; Pitfield "Shape of Government"; R.G. Robertson, "The Canadian Parliament and Cabinet in the Face of Modern Demands", C.P.A., 1968 (p. 272); P.M.O., Transcript of Prime Minister's press conference 15 October 1969.
78. Compare *ibid* and Radwanski, Trudeau, pp. 265-310, with account in F. Stacey, British Government 1966-1975: Years of Reform (Oxford, 1975) and the U.K. White Paper of October 1970), The Reorganization of Central Government (Cmd. 4506).
79. Hodgetts, Canadian Public Service, passim.
80. Also see W.B. Munro, American Influences on Canadian Government (Toronto, 1929).
81. Among them, J.P. Meekison, (ed), Federalism: Myth or Reality (3rd edition, Toronto, 1977); D. Smiley, Canada in Question: Federalism in the Seventies (2nd edition, Toronto, 1976); E.R. Black, Divided Loyalties: Canadian Concepts of Federalism (Montreal, 1975); R.M. Burns (ed), One Country or Two? (Montreal, 1971); R. Simeon (ed), Must Canada Fail? (Montreal, 1977).

82. Mallory, "Cabinet Government", p. 142. This discussion owes a particular debt to Mallory, in particular "Cabinet Government" and "Cabinets and Councils in Canada", Public Law, 1957 (p. 231), as well as to Dawson, Government of Canada; and N.M. Rogers, "The Introduction of Cabinet Government in Canada", Canadian Bar Review, 1933 (#1: p. 1).
83. H. Spiro, Government by Constitution (New York, 1959), pp. 128-9
84. See Public Archives of Canada, Guide to Canadian Ministries Since Confederation, 1867--1973 (Ottawa, 1974); and M.A. Banks, "Privy Council, Cabinet and Ministry in Britain and Canada: A Story of Confusion", C.J.E.P.S., 1965 (p. 193), with "Comment" by E. Forsey (*ibid*, 1965, p. 575) and T. Lloyd (*ibid*, 1966, p. 88) and "Reply" by M.A. Banks (*ibid*, 1966, p. 90).
85. Government of Canada, p. 171.
86. This was so in both 1968 (Trudeau) and 1979 (Clark): Clark went so far as to announce the establishment of an "inner cabinet" within the "full cabinet".
87. Mallory, "Cabinet Government", pp. 149-50; also Hodgetts, Canadian Public Service, pp. 51 and 347.
88. Mallory, "Cabinets and Councils", p. 236.
89. Though Sir John A. Macdonald, for one, intended a much stronger central government: see the essays in A.R.M. Lower et al, Evolving Canadian Federalism (Durham, N.C., 1958) as well as citations in fn. #81 above, and Mallory, Structure, pp. 325-31.
90. With legal exceptions which are increasingly unusable by convention. See Hogg, Constitutional Law, pp. 29-41, and the logical conclusion in A New Canadian Federation, published by the Constitutional Committee of the Quebec Liberal Party (January, 1980).
91. A.C. Cairns, "The Governments and Societies of Canadian Federalism", C.J.P.S., 1977 (p. 695); R. Simeon and D.J. Elkins, "Regional Political Cultures in Canada", C.J.P.S., 1974 (p. 397); J. Wilson, "The Canadian Political Cultures: Towards a Redefinition of the Nature of the Canadian Political System", C.J.P.S., 1974 (p. 438).

92. For vivid portrayals among many see A. Siegfried, The Race Question in Canada (Toronto, 1966: first published 1906); R. Cook, Canada and the French-Canadian Question (Toronto, 1966). Also the voluminous Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Ottawa, 5 volumes, 1967-1970); P.E. Trudeau, Federalism and the French Canadians (Toronto, 1968).
93. E.g. Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, vol. 4 (1969) passim.
94. See the essays in C. Winn and J. McMenemy, Political Parties in Canada (Toronto, 1976), especially N.H. Chi, "Class Cleavage": this is not to say class is not objectively important, of course, or that calls have not been made for class politics - e.g. Porter, Vertical Mosaic.
95. Through any of the major texts on Canadian government cited here - Dawson, Mallory, Van Loon and Whittington, Hockin - as well as specialized works on the cabinet - Matheson, Punnett, Rogers. What follows is only a summary. See also Gibson, Cabinet Formation; Van Loon, Structure and Membership.
96. Mallory, "Cabinet Government", p. 148; for a view that this "federalization" is less important see G. Stevenson, "Cabinet Representation and Federal-Provincial Conflict", presented to the Canadian Political Science Association annual meeting, August 1973.
97. Quoted in Mallory, "Cabinets and Councils", p. 240.
98. For more see F.C. Engelmann and M.A. Schwartz, Canadian Political Parties: Origin, Character, Impact (Scarborough, 1975); H.G. Thorburn (ed.), Party Politics in Canada (4th edition, Scarborough, 1979); P. Fox, "Politics and Parties in Canada", in Fox (ed), Politics: Canada (4th edition, Toronto, 1977); Winn and McMenemy, Political Parties; H.D. Clarke et al, Political Choice in Canada (Toronto, 1979); W. Christian and C. Campbell, Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada (Toronto, 1974).
99. The terms "tendencies" and "factions" are borrowed from R. Rose, "Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain", Political Studies, p. 1964 (p. 33).
100. Speech to the Liberal International Congress '79, Ottawa, 6 October 1979.
101. Brady, Democracy, p. 531. This is not only a Canadian phenomenon, of course (e.g. B. de Jouvenel, "The Principate", Political Quarterly, 1965 (p. 20)).

102. A.C. Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921-1965", C.J.P.S., 1968 (p. 55), with J.A.A. Lovink, "On Analysing the Impact of the Electoral System on the Party System in Canada", C.J.P.S., 1970 (p. 497) and "Reply" by Cairns (p. 517). Also W. Irvine, Does Canada Need a New Electoral System? (Kingston, 1979). Questions of electoral reform were brought to the fore by the results of the 1980 election.
103. See the striking, "Government and Counterweights: Notes for a speech by the Hon. Walter Baker, P.C., M.P., to B'Nai Brith Jewish Community Centre", 18 September 1979, press release by President of the Privy Council. Also, foreshadowing such an experience, Butler, Canberra Model, pp. 70-74.
104. Mallory, "Cabinet Government", p. 153. S.M. Lipset suggested federalism and cabinet government are incompatible, in "Democracy in Alberta", Canadian Forum, 1954, p. 198; W.R. Lederman suggested the opposite in "The British Parliamentary System and Federalism", in Burns, One Country or Two? (Montreal, 1971).

II CANADIAN CABINET STRUCTURE TO 1948

1. Dawson, Government of Canada, p. 186.
2. Ibid, 219.
3. Quoted by Rogers, "Federal Influences", pp. 106-7.
4. Glassco Commission, vol. I, p. 43.
5. Ibid, p. 43.
6. T. Cole, The Canadian Bureaucracy and Federalism 1947-1965 (Denver, 1966). pp. 29-32. For the history of the Board also see W.L. White and J.C. Strick, Policy Politics and the Treasury Board in Canadian Government (Don Mills, 1970).
7. N. Ward, The Public Purse (Toronto, 1962), p. 247; also Glassco Report, vol. I, p. 43.
8. House of Commons Debates, 2 October 1945, p. 68.
9. See Glassco Report, I, pp. 130-31.
10. Johnson, "Treasury Board", p. 346.
11. Hodgetts, Canadian Public Service, pp. 258-9; in practice the chairmanship of the Board had been taken over by a Minister other than the Minister of Finance in 1963.
12. Johnson, "Treasury Board", p. 349.
13. Sir George Murray, Report on the Organization, pp. 7-8.
14. Ibid, p. 8.
15. See W.E.D. Halliday, "The Privy Council Office and Cabinet Secretariat in Relation to the Development of Cabinet Government", Canada Year Book 1956, p. 62.
16. Senate of Canada, Report of the Special Committee on Machinery of Government (Ottawa, 1919).
17. See Heeney, "Cabinet Government", passim; Heeney, "Mackenzie King and the Cabinet Secretariat", C.P.A., 1967 (p. 366).
18. Heeney, "Mackenzie King", p. 367.
19. Heeney, "Cabinet Government", passim. Also R.M. Dawson, "The Impact of War on Canadian Political Institutions", C.J.E.P.S., 1941 (p. 170).

20. Heeney, "Cabinet Government", p. 289.
21. Heeney, "Mackenzie King", p. 367. For a more personal memoir see Heeney, The Things that are Caesar's. Also J.R. Mallory, "Mackenzie King and the Origins of the Cabinet Secretariat", C.P.A., 1976 (p. 254).
22. P.C. #1121, 25 March 1940; full text as appendix to Heeney, "Mackenzie King". Also see Robertson, "Changing Role", p. 488; and Privy Council Office, Submissions, #4, passim.
23. P-50-4: King to Heeney, 17 March 1940.
24. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Farrell, 4 February 1949.
25. Heeney, "Mackenzie King", p. 371.
26. Ibid, p. 372.
27. Ibid, p. 367.
28. C-20-S and C-20 (v.2): passim 1940's; e.g. D-13-1: Baldwin to Heeney, 10 August 1948 (with comments by Heeney).
29. C-20-7: Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952; R.G. Robertson to P.M., 7 October 1953; C-20 (v.2), passim 1945-6.
30. C-20 (v.2): "Ministerial Committee Membership", 28 January 1948.
31. C-10-6: Bryce to Heeney, 26 November 1947.
32. C-10-7: Baldwin to Heeney, 17 April 1948.
33. C-20 (v.2): "Notes on Cabinet and Secretariat", 28 January 1946.
34. Heeney, "Cabinet Government", pp. 295-6.
35. C-20-S: "Memorandum of Statement...", 27 September 1945.
36. D-13-1: Heeney to unknown, 28 February 1947.
37. C-20-S: Baldwin to Heeney, 11 February 1948.

III THE SETTING (St. Laurent)

1. This account of the political situation is especially indebted to J.M. Beck, Pendulum of Power (Scarborough, 1968); J.W. Pickersgill, My Years with Louis St. Laurent; D. Thomson, Louis St. Laurent: Canadian; the Canadian Annual Review; and to interviews in general as well as for particular citations.
2. Quoted in Pickersgill, My Years, p. 72; also pp. 49-51.
3. Quoted in Beck, Pendulum, p. 264.
4. Pickersgill's description of St. Laurent's personal reception in this campaign is vivid (My Years, pp. 86-99).
5. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 283.
6. Beck, Pendulum, p. 277.
7. My Years, p. 259; also Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 385.
8. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 321; Pearson, Mike, volume II, p. 85; Stursberg, 1957-62, p. 58.
9. Beck, Pendulum, p. 291.
10. My Years, p. 269.
11. Or at least that the Government's characteristics were not inconsistent with its times. Interviews.
12. Interview. See also D.C. Thomson, "The Political Ideas of Louis St. Laurent", in M. Hamelin (ed.), The Political Ideas of the Prime Ministers of Canada/Les Idées politiques des premiers ministres du Canada (Ottawa, 1969), p. 151.
13. C-20-7: Pickersgill notation on Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952.
14. C-20-7: "Notes for Remarks" at National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.

15. Interview
16. Interview
17. See for example Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 245, 346-7, 385.
18. Quoted in Beck, Pendulum, p. 277.
19. C-20-9(a): Phillips to File, 13 April 1953.
20. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 12 March 1954.
21. C-10-15: Heeney to C. Clark, 29 November 1948.
22. Interview
23. C-20-7: Notes for a speech to the National Defence College by Bryce, 3 September 1954.
24. Interview
25. Interviews of St. Laurent participants generally.
26. Quoted in Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 264.
27. Interviews generally.
28. Interview
29. Interview
30. Interview
31. Figures in this section calculated from Public Archives of Canada, Guide to Canadian Ministries since Confederation (1974).
32. Compare with an average tenure of $2\frac{1}{4}$ years per portfolio in the Macmillan ministry and $1\frac{3}{4}$ in the first Wilson ministry: Butler, Canberra Model, p. 44.
33. Jennings, Cabinet Government, was contemporary (see pp. 537-8).
34. C-20-6: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957.

35. See G.B. Doern, "The Development of Policy Organizations in the Executive Arena", in Doern and P. Aucoin (eds.), The Structures of Policy-making in Canada (Toronto, 1971).
36. Character sketches reflect an amalgam of information from interviews and secondary sources.
37. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 66. Also see Gibson, Cabinet Formation, pp. 155-9.
38. E.g. Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 310-11, 403; Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 66, 216.
39. My Years, p. 66. E.g. Debates, 5 June 1956, pp. 4691-2.
40. Interview
41. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 68; also pp. 215-16.
42. Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 183, 264; Pickersgill, p. 67.
43. Pearson, Mike, II: p. 29.
44. Interview; also Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 65, 218.
45. Quoted in an interview; also Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 264.
46. C-20-6: St. Laurent to Bradley, 8 June 1953; also Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 193-4 and passim.
47. My Years, p. 67.
48. Ibid, p. 69.
49. Interviews; also Pickersgill, My Years, p. 66.

IV THE PRIME MINISTER (St. Laurent)

1. C-20-7: "Notes for Remarks" at National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
2. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 295. The picture of St. Laurent as prime minister is built up from an amalgam of documentary, interview, and secondary sources. For other descriptions of his style see Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, pp. 157-9; or Punnett, Prime Minister, passim.
3. My Years, p. 117.
4. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 373.
5. Interviews
6. See Pickersgill's account in My Years pp. 28-40.
7. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 245; also see Thomson, "The Political Ideas of Louis St. Laurent".
8. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 346.
9. Interview
10. Quoted in Interview; also see Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 284; and Thomson, "Political Ideas", p. 151.
11. Thomson, St. Laurent, 295.
12. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 175.
13. P-35: Pelletier to unknown, 4 July 1957; R.G. Robertson to P.M., 10 August 1953. The minute is P.C. 3374 of 25 October 1935.
14. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Winters and Garson, 26 November 1948.
15. Mike, vol. II, pp. 6-7.
16. Interviews

17. Interview
18. Pearson, Mike, vol. II, pp. 142, 268-9; Interviews. Also see Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 287; Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 60, 35.
19. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 346.
20. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 66; also see J.G. Gardiner quoted in Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 159.
21. Quoted in Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 157.
22. E.g. see Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 502.
23. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 133.
24. Quoted in Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 442.
25. C-20-2 (v.I), Halliday to N.A. Robertson, 6 February 1950; for St. Laurent's informing of himself see also Pearson interviewed in Hockin, Apex of Power (2nd edition), p. 260; Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 262-3.
26. Interview
27. Interview
28. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 385.
29. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 61
30. Interview
31. Interview
32. Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 310-11; for apparent instances see House of Commons Debates, 1951: pp. 1277-82; 1953-4: pp. 4290-92; 1956: p. 890-91.
33. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 295.
34. C-20-7: Notes for speech to National Defence College by Bryce, 19 September 1956.

35. C-20-7: "Notes for Remarks" to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
36. Thomson, "The Cabinet of 1948", in Gibson, Cabinet Formation, p. 146.
37. Interviews; a different interpretation is in Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 157.
38. Interview
39. Interviews; also Robertson, "Changing Role", pp. 489-90.
40. C-20-7: Notes for speech to National Defence College by Bryce, 3 September 1954.
41. Interview
42. Interview
43. Interview
44. Interviews
45. Interview
46. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 327-8; Interviews, generally.
47. C-20-7: "Notes for Remarks" to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
48. Interview
49. P-51-1: Wainman-Wood to P.M., 21 June 1957.
50. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 63, and Pearson, Mike, vol. II, p. 29 and passim.
51. Interview; also see Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 113, 136-8, 253-9, 307-12.
52. Interview
53. Interview

V THE CABINET (St. Laurent)

1. That this is not necessarily the case was demonstrated by Prime Minister Clark's cabinet structure consisting of a formal, executive "Inner Cabinet" and a Cabinet (or "Full Cabinet") which was largely consultative.
2. Interview
3. Interview
4. Interview
5. C-20-7: Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952; R.G. Robertson to P.M., 7 October 1953; Cabinet Document #54-57, 13 March 1957; and C-20 (v.2): Cabinet Document #861, 18 January 1949.
6. C-20-7: Pickersgill to Sinclair and Campney, 21 October 1952.
7. C-20-7: R.G. Robertson to P.M., 7 October 1953.
8. See Heeney, "Cabinet Government", passim.
9. C-20 (v.2): Cabinet Document #861, 18 January 1949.
10. Ibid.
11. C-20-7: Cabinet Document #54-57, 13 March 1957.
12. E.g. C-20-2 (v.2): R.G. Robertson to P.M., 19 July 1951.
13. C-20-7: Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952; also see C-20-2 (v.1), N.A. Robertson to ministers, 1 May 1951.
14. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
15. Interview
16. C-20 (v.2): Cabinet Document #861, 18 January 1949; and C-20-7: Cabinet Document #54-57, 13 March 1957.

17. C-20-5: Cabinet Documents, passim.
18. Interviews generally; also C-20-5 passim. This contrasts with Harold Wilson's suggestion that opposing documents are put up in the U.K. not infrequently: The Governance of Britain, pp. 67-8; re Australia see Butler, Canberra Model, pp. 30-31, 43.
19. Interviews
20. C-20-5: passim (my addition); compare to 1978 when 483 Memoranda to Cabinet, 226 Discussion Papers, and 89 Draft Bills were submitted to Cabinet; 656 Committee Reports went to Cabinet from the various Cabinet Committees; and 731 Records of Cabinet Decision were issued.
21. See C-20-3(a): passim; also R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
22. C-20-7: Pickersgill to Gardiner, 25 February 1953.
23. C-20-7: Halliday to Lamontagne, 18 January 1956; also Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
24. C-20-7: Bryce to P.M., 19 January 1955.
25. C-20-7: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
26. C-20-1: Halliday to N.A. Robertson, 8 August 1950.
27. Ibid; and C-20-3 (a): Conclusions letters, passim.
28. Comparison of scattered file references: also see footnote #34 below.
29. C-10-15: Heeney to Clark, 29 November 1948.
30. C-20 (v.2): Cabinet Document #861, 18 January 1949.
31. C-20-7: Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952.
32. C-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 20 February 1956. Also see Mallory, Structure, p. 100.

33. C-20-7: Halliday to Pickersgill, 17 October 1952.
34. Figures are compiled from many scattered references; in particular G-1-7(a)-1. Comparable, unattributed, figures given in Nicholson, Vision, p. 31, and Newman, Renegade, p. 93.
35. Interview
36. C-20 (v.2): Cabinet Document #861, 18 January 1949.
37. Interview
38. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Reid, 19 January 1949.
39. Interview
40. Interviews
41. E.g. C-20-5: Cabinet Document #144-53 (undated).
42. File C-20-3(a)-T: Pickersgill to Bryce, 4 July 1952.
43. Debates, 23 February 1953, p. 2319.
44. Interviews
45. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
46. Interview
47. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957; also see Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 262-3.
48. Interview
49. Interview
50. C-20 (v.2): Notes for speech (by Heeney?), January 1948.
51. C-20-7: Notes for speech by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
52. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.

53. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 174-5.
54. Pearson interviewed in Hockin, Apex of Power (2nd edition), p. 262; also Interviews.
55. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
56. C-20-7: Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952.
57. Ibid.
58. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
59. E.g.s. C-20-2 (v.2): Cabinet Conclusions correspondence, passim. Also see Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 157.
60. C-20-7: Notes for speech to National Defence College by R.B. Bryce, 3 September 1954.
61. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
62. Interviewed in Hockin, Apex of Power (2nd edition), pp. 260-1; also see Pickersgill, My Years, p. 174.
63. Interview
64. Interviews generally; also Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 262-3.
65. Interview; also C-20-2 (v.1): Halliday to N.A. Robertson, 6 February 1950.
66. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 174.
67. Mike, vol. II, p. 3.
68. Quoted in Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 158.
69. Interviews
70. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.

VI CABINET COMMITTEES (St. Laurent)

1. C-20 (v.2): "Ministerial Committee Membership", 28 January 1948. Cabinet committee figures generally derive from my calculations of many scattered references.
2. C-10-15, C-10-15-D (for 1948-51), C-20-9(c) (for 1952).
3. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
4. Interviews
5. C-23: N.A. Robertson to Sheffield, 13 May 1949.
6. Interview
7. C-20-9(d): "Statement on Committee..." by the National Research Council, 15 December 1958.
8. C-20-9(d) (1952-9) and C-10-12 (1948-51).
9. Interview
10. C-20-7: Mackenzie to Bryce, 27 August 1954.
11. C-10-9: R.G. Robertson to N.A. Robertson, 23 January 1951.
12. Interviews
13. Interview
14. Interview
15. E.g. House of Commons Debates, 28 April 1950, p. 1991; also Interviews.
16. C-20-9(a), passim; also Eayrs, Defence (vol. III: Peacemaking and Deterrence), pp. 107-9.
17. C-23: N.A. Robertson to Sheffield, 13 May 1949; also Halliday, "The Executive", p. 239.

18. C-20-9(i) passim; Interviews.
19. W-10-1: Pelletier to Acting P.M., 31 January 1955.
20. Interview
21. C-20 (v.2): Note to the Secretariat (#3) from Heeney, 5 March 1949.
22. Interview
23. Interview
24. Interview
25. C-20-9(j): Bryce to P.M., 26 October 1955.
26. Interview
27. Interview
28. Interviews
29. C-23: N.A. Robertson to Sheffield, 13 May 1949.
30. Interviews generally.
31. Interview
32. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Pickersgill, 30 March 1953; and passim.
33. C-20-5: Cabinet Document #49-53, 18 February 1953.
34. Interviews
35. Interview
36. C-20-7: Notes for speech by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
37. Interview
38. I-50 (v.1): Pelletier to N.A. Robertson, 27 June 1950.
39. D-1-8(h)-D: Mackenzie to Cabinet Committee on Emergency Plans, 6 January 1960.

40. P-51-1: attachment to R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 4 April 1952.
41. Interview
42. P-50-2: passim.
43. C-23: Committee Book (attached); also C-20-7: Cabinet Document #54-57, 13 March 1957.
44. P-50-2: Hill to Bryce, 19 June 1957.
45. P-50-2: Robertson to P.M., 23 October 1953.
46. P-50-2: "MWC" to R.G. Robertson, 22 October 1953.
47. Interview
48. D-13-1 and D-18-1, passim.
49. House of Commons Debates, 27 November 1951, pp. 1368-9.
50. Ward, Public Purse, p. 212.
51. House of Commons Debates, 6 August 1956, pp. 7111-13; also see Halliday, "The Executive", passim.
52. D-18-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957; also see House of Commons Debates, 27 July 1955, pp. 6932-3.
53. The phrase is owed to Johnson, "Treasury Board", p. 346.
54. D-18-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957.
55. House of Commons Debates, 28 April 1950, p. 1991; similar statements in Dawson, Government, p. 359; and Glassco Report, vol. I, p. 131.
56. C-20-7: Notes for speech to National Defence College by Bryce, 19 September 1956.
57. C-20-7: Cabinet Document #54-57, 13 March 1957.
58. Interview

59. D-18-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957.
60. House of Commons Debates, 27 July 1955, p. 6933.
61. Interview
62. D-18-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957; also Interviews.
63. Cole, Canadian Bureaucracy, p. 31.
64. Interview
65. Interviews
66. Interview
67. Interview
68. Interview
69. D-18-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957.
70. C-20-9 (e) passim; also C-10-1.
71. Interview
72. Quoted in Matheson. Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 85.
73. P-21: passim 1948-1952.
74. P-21: Pelletier to N.A. Robertson, 16 September 1949.
75. P-20-1: Bryce to Prime Minister, 6 July 1957.
76. C-23: Committee Book (attached).
77. C-20-4: Cabinet Directive Circular #23, 31 July 1952; Interview.
78. P-21: draft memo to P.M., 16 September 1949.
79. Interviews

80. C-20-4: Cabinet Directive Circular #23, 31 July 1952; P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957.
81. Interview
82. Interestingly, more recent practice is to reverse their positions.
83. Interview
84. P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957.
85. C-20-7: Mackenzie to Bryce, 27 August 1954; also C-20-9(e): Pelletier to P.M., 26 October 1953.
86. Robertson, "Changing Role", p. 490.
87. C-20-9(a), C-10-9, passim.
88. C-20-7: Notes for speech to National Defence College by Bryce, 19 September 1956.
89. Interview. Newman (Renegade, p. 343) exaggerates the committee's meetings.
90. C-20-S: Gill and Reid to N.A. Robertson and Heeney, 27 June 1949.
91. Interview
92. C-20-S: Smith, "Cabinet Defence Secretariat", 22 September 1948.
93. C-23: Committee Book (attached); also House of Commons Debates, 18 July 1956, p. 6121.
94. Interviews; also C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 15 February 1954.
95. Interview
96. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 16 February 1954.
97. C-20-9(a): Halliday to Bryce, 6 December 1954, and passim.
98. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 27 January 1954.

99. C-23: Committee Book (attached); Interview.
100. House of Commons Debates, 18 July 1956, p. 6121.
101. C-20-9(c) passim: confirmed by Interview.
102. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Reid, 19 January 1949.
103. C-10-12, C-20-9(d), passim.
104. C-10-15: Heeney to P.M., 29 December 1948.
105. C-20-9(h) passim (esp. 1955).
106. Ibid.; scattered file references.
107. C-10-14, passim.
108. I-50 (v.1), passim.
109. Scattered file references 1948-9. This citation is used where no single reference is possible but a complicated discussion uncalled for; in many cases the references are to cabinet documents and to records of decision which are not individually clear but permit a cumulative assessment.
110. W-10-1 (v.1), C-20-9(g), passim.
111. C-10-17 (1951), C-20-9(b), passim.
112. C-20-9(j), passim.
113. C-20-5: Cabinet Document #25-55. 8 February 1955.
114. W-10-1: Pelletier to Acting P.M., 31 January 1955.
115. C-23: Committee Book (attached).
116. Scattered file references, 1950.
117. Scattered file references, 1948.
118. Scattered file references, 1951-3.
119. Scattered file references, 1954.

120. Scattered file references, 1951.
121. Scattered file references, 1954-5.
122. Scattered file references, 1953.
123. C-20-9(f), passim.
124. C-10-15: Bryce to Heeney, 7 December 1948.
125. C-23: N.A. Robertson to Sheffield, 13 May 1949.
126. Interview
127. Interview
128. C-10-1: Pelletier to Driedger, 22 July 1949.
129. C-23: N.A. Robertson to Sheffield, 13 May 1949.
130. C-10-17: N.A. Robertson to P.M., 6 March 1951.
131. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 27 January 1954.
132. Interview
133. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 193 et seq.
134. Thomson, "Political Ideas", p. 141.
135. Interview
136. C-10-1: Pelletier to E.A. Driedger, 22 July 1949.
137. Interview
138. P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957.
139. D-40 (v.1): N.A. Robertson to P.M., 1 February 1950.
140. Interview
141. These calculations are very carefully made today, by the PCO, by ministers themselves, and by the press when committee memberships are public.

142. C-23: Committee Book (attached).
143. C-23: N.A. Robertson to Sheffield, 13 May 1949.
144. C-10-15: Heeney to P.M., 2 March 1949.
145. Interview
146. E.g. C-10-12-D: N.A. Robertson to P.M., 11 February 1950.
147. E.g. C-20-9(a): "WRM" to P.M., 26 August 1957.
148. C-23: Committee Book (attached) - Territorial Waters.
149. C-10-5: Baldwin to unknown, 23 November 1948.
150. Interview
151. Interview
152. C-20-9(e): Pelletier to P.M., 26 October 1953.
153. Interview
154. Interviews
155. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Farrell, 4 February 1949.
156. Interviews
157. C-20-9(a): "Cabinet Defence Committee: Distribution of Documents", undated but October 1952.
158. C-20 (v.2): Note to the Secretariat (#3) from Heeney, 5 March 1949.
159. E.g. C-20-9(a): Claxton to Bryce, 24 March 1954.
160. C-20-9(a): passim 1952-54.
161. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 30 March 1954.

- 162. Interviews
- 163. Interview
- 164. P-51-2(a): R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 14 January 1953.
- 165. C-20-S: Gill and Reid to N.A. Robertson and Heeney, 27 June 1949.
- 166. C-20-7: Cabinet Document #242-53, 13 October 1953.
- 167. Interviews
- 168. Interview
- 169. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Pickersgill, 2 April 1953.
- 170. Ibid.
- 171. P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957.
- 172. C-10-9: Claxton to Gill, 7 September 1949.
- 173. C-20-1: Mackenzie to P.M., 4 October 1956; also Interview.
- 174. Interview
- 175. E.g. P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957.
- 176. C-20-S: Gill and Reid to N.A. Robertson and Heeney, 27 June 1949.
- 177. P-51-2(a): R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 14 January 1953.
- 178. C-20-9(d): Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
- 179. I-50 (v.1): Pelletier to N.A. Robertson, 27 June 1950.
- 180. Interview
- 181. C-20-9(j): R.G. Robertson to Bryce, 24 October 1955.
- 182. Interview

VII MINISTERIAL RELATIONS (St. Laurent)

1. Interview
2. Interview
3. C-20-7(b): Fournier to Hill, 1 February 1954.
4. P.C. 3374, 25 October 1935. Also P-35.
R.G. Robertson to P.M., 10 August 1953.
5. C-20-S: Note to the Cabinet Secretariat #1,
by Heeney, 6 July 1948.
6. Interviews
7. Interview
8. Interviews; also Pickersgill, My Years, p. 66.
9. My Years, p. 231.
10. Interview
11. Interview
12. Interviews
13. Interview; also Pickersgill, My Years, p. 66.
14. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence
College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
15. Interviews generally; also Pickersgill, My
Years, especially pp. 67-70.
16. Interviews
17. See Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 66, 216.
18. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 453; also
Pickersgill, My Years, p. 150.
19. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 151; also Thomson,
St. Laurent, pp. 310-11.
20. Debates, 20 March 1951, p. 1448.

21. E.g. Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 392-5; Pickersgill, My Years, p. 262, and pp. 269-299.
22. Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 399.
23. Interview
24. Interview
25. Interviews
26. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 104.
27. Despite the fact that as the Speaker said in November 1975 in relation to Question Period, "it has never been the practice to put questions to a minister in terms of his geographic location rather than his area of responsibility": Globe and Mail, 24 January 1976.
28. C-20-10: Bryce to Pickersgill, 22 November 1954.
29. E.g. Pearson, Mike, vol. II, p. 18.
30. My Years, pp. 65-6.
31. G-1-7(b)-4: draft memo Bryce to P.M., 17 January 1961. Also C-20-6: "AN" to Bryce, 3 September 1958; and Cabinet Document #300-58, 24 October 1958.
32. Interview
33. Gardiner quoted in Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 159; Pickersgill, My Years, p. 70, p. 66; Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 503.
34. Interview
35. For striking contrast, see memoirs by Pearson (Mike, vol. II) and Pickersgill, (My Years).
36. Interviews
37. Interview
38. Interview

39. Interviews
40. E.g. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 225, 227-9.
41. Interview
42. E.g. Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 422-3.
43. Interview
44. Interviews
45. Interview
46. Interviews
47. Interview
48. C-20-S: Gill and Reid to N.A. Robertson and Heeney, 27 June 1949.
49. C-20-4: Cabinet Directive Circular #23, 31 July 1952.
50. Interviews
51. The Minister of Agriculture still periodically hints he should (must) "have the Wheat Board", which is usually reserved to a Western Minister today.
52. This conventional equality has been noted by such different authorities as Mallory, Structure, p. 91 and Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 40.
53. Interview; also Thomson, St. Laurent, p. 263.
54. Interview
55. Interview
56. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 255; also House of Commons Debates, 3 May 1954, p. 4335.
57. Interview

58. C-20-7: Cabinet Document #54-57, 13 March 1957.
59. P-20-1: Cabinet Directive Circular #23, 31 July 1952.
60. C-20-7: Halliday to R.G. Robertson, 26 June 1953; also Interview.
61. Interview
62. C-20-2 (v.2): Heeney to Gardiner, 8 November 1948.
63. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953.
64. G.B. Doern, "Horizontal and Vertical Portfolios", in Doern and Wilson (eds), Issues, pp. 315-17.
65. Interview
66. Interviews
67. E.g. Thomson, St. Laurent, pp. 422-3; Interview.
68. Interview
69. This section is based on interviews generally plus occasional hints in documents (e.g. C-20-5: Cabinet Documents, passim).
70. Interview
71. Interview
72. C-20-7: Halliday to R.G. Robertson, 26 June 1953.
73. Interview; also Pickersgill, My Years, p. 66.
74. Interview
75. Interview

76. Interview
77. Interviews; also Pickersgill, My Years, passim and pp. 66-9.
78. Interview
79. Interview
80. C-10-15: Heeney to Clark, 29 November 1948.
81. Punnett, Prime Minister, p. 110. Of course others have drawn similar conclusions, e.g. Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, pp. 66-68; Mallory, Structure, p. 98.
82. Interview
83. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953.
84. C-20-7: Pickersgill to P.M., 24 January 1953.
85. See Pearson, Mike, vol. II, Chapter 11.
86. E.g. Robertson, "Changing Role", p. 498; Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, pp. 157-9.

VIII THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (St. Laurent)

1. Heeney's own works ("Cabinet Government"; "Mackenzie King"; and The Things that are Caesar's) are a rare instance of a Canadian civil servant who has published writings during his career and memoirs afterwards. Also see Mallory, "Mackenzie King"; Eayrs, Defence: Peacemaking, pp. 42-4.
2. See Chapter II, pp. 54-62.
3. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953.
4. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 64-5; Interview.
5. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 173-180.
6. P-51-1: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 4 April 1952; C-20-7: passim 1952-3.
7. P-50-2: Bryce to Hill, 4 February 1955.
8. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Farrell, 4 February 1949.
9. House of Commons Debates, 27 July 1955, p. 6898.
10. See Government of Canada Telephone Books.
11. House of Commons Debates, 27 July 1955, p. 6898.
12. Estimates of the Government of Canada; Government of Canada Telephone Books.
13. G-1-26(b): draft "Statement of Functions" by Bryce, 16 February 1961.
14. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
15. E.g. C-20-S: Heeney to Smith, 1 October 1948.
16. P-51-1: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 4 April 1952.
17. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 12 March 1954.

18. E.g. of order's importance: C-20-7: Pickersgill to Gardiner, 25 February 1953.
19. Interviews; also P-51-2(a): R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 14 January 1953.
20. P-50-1: Abbott to N.A. Robertson, 6 April 1949.
21. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence College, by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
22. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959; Interview.
23. C-20-2 (v.1): Halliday to N.A. Robertson, 6 February 1950.
24. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 17 February 1954.
25. C-20-7: Halliday to Bryce, 19 May 1954.
26. C-20-2 (v.1): Halliday to N.A. Robertson, 6 February 1950.
27. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 17 February 1954; also C-20-7: R.G. Robertson to P.M., 7 October 1953.
28. D-13-1: Heeney to unknown, 28 February 1947. Compare citations here to Robertson, "Changing Role"; and P.C.O., Submissions, #4.
29. P-50-2: R.G. Robertson to P.M., 23 October 1953.
30. C-20-7: notation on Halliday to Pickersgill, 26 May 1952.
31. Interviews
32. P-51-2(a): R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 14 January 1953.
33. C-20-9(a): Bryce to Phillips, 25 January 1954.
34. C-23: Committee Book (attachment).

35. G-1-26(b): PCO reply to Glassco Commission questionnaire, 21 April 1961.
36. C-20-S: "EG" to Heeney, 23 September 1948.
37. C-20-4: Cabinet Directive Circular #23, 31 July 1952.
38. A-15-1(c): N.A. Robertson to Baldwin, 3 January 1952.
39. Interview
40. C-20-3: passim 1948.
41. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
42. C-20-7: Halliday to R.G. Robertson, 26 June 1953.
43. Interview
44. Interviews. See also Pickersgill, My Years, p. 228; Pearson, Mike, vol. II, p. 296.
45. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
46. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953.
47. My Years, p. 206.
48. P-51-1: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 4 April 1952.
49. Ibid.
50. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
51. Interview
52. Interview
53. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
54. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953. The Canadian term "deputy minister" is the equivalent of "permanent secretary".
55. My Years, p. 3.

56. P-51-1: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 4 April 1952.
57. Pickersgill, My Years, p. 63.
58. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
59. C-20-7, Notes for speech to National Defence College by Bryce, 19 September 1956.
60. Interview
61. Interview
62. Interviews
63. Interview
64. Interview
65. Pickersgill, My Years, pp. 174-5.
66. My Years, p. 207.
67. Interviews
68. C-20-2 (v.1): Halliday to N.A. Robertson, 6 February 1950.
69. R.G. Robertson's phrase is "non-partisan, operationally oriented yet politically sensitive"; P.M.O. is "partisan, politically oriented, yet operationally sensitive": "Changing Role", p. 506.
70. Heeney, "Mackenzie King"; and The Things that are Caesars, pp. 37-81.
71. P-50-1: Pelletier to Heeney, 16 February 1949.
72. P-51: Pickersgill to PCO staff, 29 May 1952.
73. Interview
74. My Years, pp. 174-180.

75. P-51: Pelletier to Bryce, 17 May 1957,
76. E.g. Minutes of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Miscellaneous Estimates, 22 May 1975; also J.R. Mallory, "The Two Clerks: Parliamentary Discussion of the Role of the Privy Council Office", C.J.P.S., 1977 (p. 3).
77. Interview
78. C-20-9(a): Phillips to file, 13 April 1953.
79. Interview
80. C-20-S: Heeney to Smith, 1 October 1948; also Heeney, "Cabinet Government", p. 282.
81. Interview
82. D-19: Heeney to unknown, 11 January 1949 .
(attached to Heeney to Claxton, 11 January 1949).
83. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953.
84. Ibid.
85. Interview
86. E.g. C-20 (v.2): Cabinet Document #861, 18 January 1949.
87. C-20 (v.2): Heeney to Farrell, 4 February 1949.
88. Interview; e.g. C-20-7: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 23 February 1953.
89. C-20-7: Notes for speech to National Defence College by Bryce, 19 September 1956.
90. Interviews
91. C-20-7: Pickersgill to Gardiner, 25 February 1953.
92. My Years, p. 185.

93. Interviews

94. P-50-1: Heeney to P.M., 12 January 1949
(attached to Heeney to P.M., 5 March 1949).

95. Interview

IX THE CIVIL SERVICE (St. Laurent)

1. For early statement of this view see House of Commons Debates, 28 February 1956, p. 1643. Also see below footnotes #36-38.
2. Mike, vol. II, p. 2.
3. Interviews
4. Interview
5. Interview; for Pickersgill on Clark see My Years, p. 180.
6. Interview
7. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
8. Interviews
9. Interview, See also Thomson, "Political Ideas", pp. 148-9.
10. Interview
11. Interviews
12. P-51-1: "PMD" to Halliday, 12 June 1957.
13. Interview
14. E.g. House of Commons Debates, 27 July 1955, pp. 6932-3; and Glassco Report, vol. I, pp. 132-3.
15. Interview
16. Interview
17. Interview. See also Eayrs, The Art of the Possible, including quote of M. Sharp, p.35.
18. Interviews
19. Interview

20. C-20-3(a): Cabinet Decisions correspondence, passim. Unfortunately the most detailed examination of interdepartmental committees dates only from 1966: G.B. Doern, "The Role of Interdepartmental Committees in the Policy Process", Carleton University M.A. Thesis (1966).
21. Interviews
22. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
23. Interviews
24. Interview
25. C-20-9(j): Cunningham to Sinclair, 24 November 1955.
26. C-10-15: Heeney to Clark, 29 November 1948.
27. G-1-7(d): R.G. Robertson to P.M., 9 August 1963; Interviews.
28. Interview
29. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
30. Interviews
31. Doern, "Interdepartmental Committees", p. 114.
32. Interview; also C-23: Committee Book (attached).
33. Interview
34. W-10-1(a): Cabinet Document #25-55, 8 February 1955.
35. C-20-2 (v.2): N.A. Robertson to Harris, 29 June 1950.
36. M. Lamontagne, "The Influence of the Politician", p. 266 (French in original).
37. House of Commons Debates, 28 February 1956, p. 1643.

38. Interviews. See also Eayrs' use of R. Barry Farrell's term, the "under Cabinet" in Art of the Possible, pp. 33-35.
39. C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953.
40. Interviews
41. Interview
42. Interview
43. Interview
44. E.g. Interviews
45. Interview
46. Interview
47. Interviews
48. Mallory, Structure, p. 156; also C-10: R.G. Robertson to Pickersgill, 17 March 1953; J.J. Deutsch, "Some Thoughts on the Public Service", C.J.E.P.S., 1957 (p. 83).
49. Interview
50. Interview
51. Interview
52. C-20-9(e): Garson to P.M., 11 July 1952.
53. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Bryce, 17 February 1954.
54. Interview
55. Interview
56. Interview
57. Interview

58. Interview

59. Interview

60. Interviews

61. Interview

X CONSEQUENCES (St. Laurent)

1. Interview.
2. C-20-7: Notes for a speech to the National Defence College by Bryce, 3 September 1954.
3. Cf. Chapt. I, p. 15.
4. C-20-7: Halliday to Bryce, 14 June 1954.
5. Interview
6. Interview
7. Interview
8. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
9. Interviews
10. C-20-7: Notes for remarks to the National Defence College by R.G. Robertson, 5 September 1952.
11. Interview
12. Interview
13. Interview
14. Interview
15. Interview
16. Fn. #2 above.
17. C-20-9(a): Phillips to Pickersgill, 18 October 1952.
18. C-20-S: Pelletier to N.A. Robertson, 27 February 1950.
19. Interviews
20. Interview
21. Interview

XI THE SETTING (Diefenbaker)

1. There are many accounts of the 1957 election: compare especially Diefenbaker, One Canada: Years of Achievement; Pickersgill, My Years; Newman, Renegade; J. Meisel, The Canadian General Election of 1957 (Toronto, 1962); Beck, Pendulum.
2. Interview. A fascinating comparison is with the 1979 Conservative Cabinet; e.g. "Government and Counterweights: Notes for a Speech by the Hon. Walter Baker, P.C., M.P., to B'Nai Brith Jewish Community Centre", 18 September 1979, press release by President of the Privy Council.
3. Beck, Pendulum, p. 316. Also see Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, pp. 10-13.
4. Beck, Pendulum, p. 314.
5. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 77, 100-107; also Martineau in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 197.
6. E.g. Impressions of Newman, Renegade, p. 101; Nicholson, Vision, p. 107; Sevigny, This Game, pp. 164, 185, 190.
7. Sevigny, This Game, p. 169.
8. A vivid account is in Newman, Renegade, especially pp. 201-216. Accounts of the Diefenbaker years with different biases abound.
9. See in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, Menzies pp. 24-5; A. Hamilton, pp. 214-15.
10. Nicholson, Vision, pp 111-116.
11. Diefenbaker's own account is fascinating, but must be taken with a kilo of salt: compare Newman, Renegade; Stursberg, Leadership Lost; Diefenbaker, One Canada, vol. III: The Tumultuous Years (Toronto, 1977).
12. Interviews

13. E.g. Sevigny, This Game, p. 143; Newman, Renegade, p. 98; Nicholson, Vision, p. 141.
14. On this point also see Starr in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 186-8; Newman, Renegade, pp. 95-6.
15. P-31-1: Bryce to P.M., 14 January 1959.
16. Among many examples, see Sevigny, This Game, passim (especially p. 227); Nicholson, Vision, pp. 177-8; Newman, Renegade, pp. 94-5, 182; and Stursberg, Leadership Gained and Leadership Lost, passim; as well, of course, as Diefenbaker's memoirs One Canada, vols. II and III.
17. Sketches are drawn from Interviews generally plus scattered documents references and secondary sources: see all works cited in this chapter.
18. Interview
19. Interview
20. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, see O'Leary p. 78, Bell 197-8, W. Hamilton 198, Forsey 206; Newman, Renegade, pp. 282-9; Nicholson, Vision, pp. 99-101; T. Van Dusen, The Chief (Toronto, 1968), p. 36.
21. Interviews; also Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 217-227.
22. Interview
23. Interview
24. See G. Grant, Lament for a Nation (Toronto, 1965); also Christian and Campbell, Canadian Parties and Ideologies, p. 200; Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 217-27.
25. Interviews
26. Quoted in Newman, Renegade, pp. 197-8.
27. Interview

28. Years of Achievement, p. 10.
29. Van Dusen, Chief, p. 36.
30. E.g. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 121, 164, 172, 184-5; Newman, Renegade, pp. 94, 98, 239-48; Van Dusen, Chief, p. 28.
31. Interview; also Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 236; Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 102-5.
32. Interview
33. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 125.
34. Interview
35. E.g. F-1-16(e): Cabinet Document #333-62, 11 October 1962. Also in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, Menzies p. 125, Faibish p. 210; Sevigny, This Game, pp. 184-5, 274.
36. Interview
37. Interview
38. Interview
39. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 221 and 277.
40. Ibid, p. 169.
41. Interview
42. H-4-6: Record of Decision for 14 February 1963.
43. Interview. For discussion of growth in government to 1962 see Glassco Report, vol. I, chapter 4.
44. E.g. Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 312; Nicholson, Vision, p. 234. Interviews.
45. House of Commons Debates, 22 November 1957, p. 1412.
46. Interview

XII THE PRIME MINISTER (Diefenbaker)

1. Interview. For discussion of similar problems in Australia, see Butler, Canberra Model, pp. 74-84 ("The Tragedy of Gaining Office"!)
2. Interview
3. C-20-12: extract from Cabinet Conclusions 6 July 1957 (copy dated 23 February 1959)
4. P-20-3: Bryce to P.M., 16 October 1958.
5. P-35: Pelletier to unknown, 4 July 1957.
6. Interview; also House of Commons Debates, 11 September 1961, p. 8174.
7. E.g. D-1-6: March 1960 passim.
8. G-1-3(a): Bryce to Fulton, 26 April 1961; Interview; in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, Menzies p. 117; Sevigny, This Game, p. 129.
9. C-20-11: Campbell to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, 10 July 1959.
10. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, A. Hamilton p. 176, Fleming p. 179, Fulton p. 178. Interviews.
11. Interview; also F-1-16(a): August-September 1960.
12. Interview
13. Interviews
14. Interviews
15. Interviews. E.g. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 143, 232; Nicholson, Vision, p. 107.
16. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 80, 227; Newman, Renegade, pp. 159-69.

17. E.g. Grosart in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 150-1; Matheson, Prime Minister and Cabinet, p. 213.
18. Interview
19. Interview
20. Interview. See Diefenbaker memoirs, One Canada (all 3 vol.), passim. Also Newman, Renegade, pp. 94-5.
21. Interview
22. Interview. Sevigny, This Game, p. 177; Newman, Renegade, pp. 94-5.
23. Interview
24. Interviews.
25. This Game, p. 143, and pp. 54, 177.
26. Interview; Newman, Renegade, pp. 121-33.
27. Autocrat or not has been a matter of great debate. See Stursberg, Leadership Gained, passim, e.g. Faibish p. 178; Newman, Renegade, passim.
28. Interview
29. Interview
30. Interview
31. A. Hamilton in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 176.
32. Interview. Also see House of Commons Debates, 11 September 1961, p. 8174; Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 235; and references in fn. #10 above.
33. Interviews
34. Especially by Newman, Renegade, e.g. p. 92. Also see Sevigny, This Game, p. 143; Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 175 et seq.

35. Diefenbaker interviewed in Hockin, Apex of Power (2nd edition), p. 252.
36. Sevigny, This Game, p. 143.
37. Ibid, p. 232; also pp. 162-3, 171-2; and Newman, Renegade, pp. 242, 232-48.
38. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 178.
39. Interview
40. Interview. Also Diefenbaker in Hockin, Apex of Power (2nd ed.), pp. 252-3.
41. Interview. Also Sevigny, This Game, p. 178.
42. Interview
43. Interview
44. Sevigny, This Game, p. 178, and passim.
45. Interviews
46. Interviews
47. Interview
48. Years of Achievement, p. 16.
49. Interviews
50. Guest in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 181-2; also Newman, Renegade, pp. 82-3.
51. Interview. Also Sevigny, This Game, p. 160. What a contrast with recent Ministries, when restructuring seems almost to precede cabinet-making.
52. Interview
53. As exemplified in Newman, Renegade, passim; also Van Dusen, Chief, passim.
54. Interview
55. Interview

56. Interview
57. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, see Bell p. 103, Fleming p. 179. Interviews
58. Years of Achievement, p. 233.
59. Interview. Also Diefenbaker in Hockin, Apex of Power, pp. 252-3.
60. Interview
61. Years of Achievement, p. 75.
62. Interview
63. G-2-7(a): Cabinet Document #418-62, 14 December 1962; H-4-6: Cabinet Document #36-63, 23 January 1963.
64. Years of Achievement, p. 141.
65. Interview
66. Years of Achievement, p. 235.
67. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 179.
68. P-51-1: Bryce to Leger, 16 September 1957.
69. Interview
70. Interview
71. Interview
72. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 218.
73. Interview. Also in *ibid.* pp. 125, 211.

XIII THE CABINET (Diefenbaker)

1. G-1-7(a): Gaskell to Bryce, 17 April 1963.
2. C-20-1: Cabinet Document #117-57, 26 June 1957.
3. G-1-10(a): Hodgson to Bryce, 30 April 1962.
4. P-20-1: Record of Decision for 23 July 1957.
5. C-20-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 20 June 1957.
6. G-1-7(a): Halliday to Bryce, 5 December 1961.
7. C-20-1: Bryce to Hill et al, 31 March 1958;
G-1-7(a): notes on copy of Cabinet Document
#54-57, attached to Halliday to Bryce, 5
December 1961.
8. C-20-11: Campbell to Under Secretary of State
for External Affairs, 10 July 1959.
9. G-1-9(f): Halliday to file, 31 January 1962;
also Newman, Renegade, p. 287; Flynn in
Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 188.
10. Calculations from many file references. Also
see Nicholson, Vision, p. 160; Newman,
Renegade, p. 93.
11. C-20-2: G-1-7(a)-2, passim; also Nicholson,
Vision, p. 31.
12. A. Hamilton in Stursberg, Leadership Gained,
p. 111.
13. C-20-5: Cabinet documents, passim; G-1-7(a):
Halliday to Bryce, 4 January 1960.
14. Faibish in Stursberg, Leadership Gained,
p. 211.
15. D-2-12(a): passim 1960-61.
16. Interview
17. Interview

18. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 176-7.
19. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
20. Interview
21. F-1-16(a): Bryce to P.M., 15 November 1961.
22. Interview
23. Interview
24. Sevigny, This Game, p. 170.
25. Interview
26. Interview
27. Interview
28. G-1-3(a)-1: "AL" to Chevrier, 5 September 1963.
29. G-1-7(a): Halliday to Bryce, 5 December 1961.
30. G-1-7(a): Gaskell to Bryce, 17 April 1963.
31. G-1-7(a): Hodgson to Bryce, 8 November 1961.
32. C-20-2: unsigned note dated 18 July 1957.
33. C-20-2: unsigned, undated note referring to cabinet meeting of 3 December 1959.
34. C-20-1: Bryce to Acting P.M., 4 December 1958, Sevigny, This Game, p. 147.
35. C-20-9(m): Wall to Fairclough, 15 December 1958.
36. G-1-26(b): PCO reply to Glassco Commission questionnaire, 21 April 1961.
37. Interviews
38. Interview
39. C-20-2, and G-1-7(a)-2: passim.
40. E.g. Harkness in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 176-7; Sevigny, This Game, pp. 157-60.

41. Sevigny, This Game, p. 157; Interview.
42. Interview
43. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960; also C-20-2, G-1-7(a)-2: passim.
44. Nicholson, Vision, p. 100. Interviews.
45. E.g. Fulton in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 179; Newman, Renegade, p. 94.
46. Newman, Renegade, p. 94.
47. E.g. G-1-7(a)-3-C: Halliday to Fleming, 19 September 1962.
48. Sevigny, This Game, p. 156; e.g. C-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 3 December 1959.
49. C-20-2, G-1-7(a)-2: passim.
50. C-20-7: Halliday to Bryce, 27 January 1958.
51. Interview. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, Green pp. 175-6, Harkness p. 176, Sevigny p. 177, MacLean p. 179.
52. Sevigny, This Game, p. 154.
53. Interview
54. Interview
55. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained. p. 180. Also Interview.
56. Faibish in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 178.
57. Interviews
58. Interview; also Fulton in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 179.
59. Interview
60. Interview

61. Interview
62. Interviews. Also Harkness in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 176-7; Sevigny, This Game, p. 158.
63. G-1-7(a): "DMW" to Bryce, 29 November 1961.
64. Interview
65. Interview
66. D-2-12(a): Record of Decision for 19 July 1960; also Bryce to P.M., 30 September 1960.
67. Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 312; Nicholson, Vision, p. 234; Sevigny, This Game, p. 160.
68. C-20-7: Halliday to Bryce, 18 April 1958.
69. Interviews
70. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
71. Interview.

XIV MINISTERIAL RELATIONS (Diefenbaker)

1. See Newman, Renegade, p. 222.
2. N-1-1: passim.
3. Interview
4. Interview
5. E.g. vividly Sevigny, This Game, pp. 176-8, 190-91, 262-78.
6. Interview; also Sevigny, This Game, p. 176.
7. Interviews
8. Interviews; also Balcer in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 185; Sevigny, This Game, p. 227; Newman, Renegade, Chapter 7.
9. One Canada, passim; e.g. Years of Achievement, pp. 4-7, 43-4.
10. Newman, Renegade; e.g. pp. 94-5.
11. Interview
12. Vivid e.g. is Sevigny, This Game, p. 170 and passim.
13. See in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, Menzies pp. 123-5, A. Hamilton pp. 213-15; Newman, Renegade, pp. 95, 182; Interviews generally.
14. Interview
15. Interview
16. D-2-12(a): Bryce to P.M., 12 October 1960.
17. Interview; also e.g. D-2-12(a): Bryce to P.M., 30 September 1960.
18. Interview
19. Interview

20. Interviews
21. Interview
22. Interview; see Stursberg, Leadership Gained, Chapter 12.
23. C-20-7: Notes for speech by Bryce, 19 September 1956.
24. Again Sevigny is vivid: This Game, pp. 100-107.
25. C-20-6: "AW" to Bryce, 3 September 1958; and G-1-7(b)-4: Bryce to Mackenzie, 4 January 1961.
26. Interview
27. Sevigny, This Game, p. 138.
28. Interviews generally.
29. E.g. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 138, 154.
30. G-1-7(d): Hodgson to Bryce, 25 June 1962.
31. H-1-8(r): Hodgson to file, 6 March 1962.
32. C-20-3(a): Bryce to Fleming, 24 March 1959.
33. F-1-16(a)-M: Notes for meeting, 3 October 1960; C-2-3(g): Record of Decision for 14 September 1960.
34. Interview
35. In Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 256-7.
36. Interview
37. Interview
38. Interview
39. Interview
40. Interviews
41. D-2-12(a): Bryce to P.M., 30 September 1960.

42. Quoted in Dempson, Assignment Ottawa (Toronto, 1968). p. 109.
43. Years of Achievement, p. 40.
44. Interviews
45. Interview
46. Interview; also Starr in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 186.
47. Interviews; also see Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 44; Sevigny, This Game, pp. 176-8, 274-5.
48. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
49. E.g. Ibid; and C-20-5: Cabinet Document #325-57, 16 December 1957.
50. C-20-5: Cabinet Documents, passim.
51. E.g.s: G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 7 February 1961; and Bryce to P.M., 26 June 1962; P-20-3: Bryce to Driedger, 20 January 1959; C-20-5: passim.
52. C-20-2: Agenda, passim; and C-20-5: Cabinet Documents, passim.
53. Ibid.
54. Interviews
55. Interview
56. This Game, p. 170.
57. Interview
58. Interviews
59. Sevigny, This Game, pp. 176-8, 227; also Nicholson, Vision, pp. 177-8.
60. This Game, p. 262.
61. Interviews; also Sevigny, This Game, p. 176.

62. Green in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 168.
63. Sevigny, This Game, p. 278.
64. Interview
65. Interview
66. F-1-16(a): Plumptre to Taylor, 22 June 1960.
67. G-1-13(a): Bryce to Fulton, 26 April 1961.
Also Interviews.
68. Interview
69. C-20-5: Cabinet Document #139-58, 27 May 1958.
70. Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 312;
Sevigny, This Game, p. 160; Newman, Renegade,
p. 234.

XV CABINET COMMITTEES (Diefenbaker)

1. House of Commons Debates, 4 February 1960, p. 756.
2. Interview
3. P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957; Record of Decision for 23 July 1957; P-50-2: Hill to Bryce, 19 June 1957; D-18-1: Bryce to Diefenbaker, 19 June 1957; C-20-9(a): Mackenzie to P.M., 26 August 1957.
4. Unless otherwise indicated, approximate cabinet committee figures have been constructed by the author from P.C.O. files by piecemeal addition, deduction, and educated guesswork.
5. Interviews
6. Interview
7. Interviews
8. G-1-7(a): February 1960 passim.
9. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
10. Ibid.
11. Interviews
12. Interview
13. Interview
14. Interview
15. Interview
16. G-1-7(d): undated list, October 1960.
17. Interview

18. Interview
19. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
20. Interview
21. Organization of the Government of Canada,
Ottawa, 1959, p. 156.
22. Glassco Report, vol. I, p. 130.
23. Interview
24. Interview
25. Interviews
26. Interviews
27. Interviews
28. Interview
29. Glassco Report, vol. I, p. 53.
30. Ibid, p. 54.
31. Ibid, pp. 132-3.
32. Ibid, p. 107; also pp. 102-7 passim.
33. G-1-13(a)-1: R.G. Robertson to P.M., 31 July
1963.
34. G-1-3(a): Bryce to Fulton, 26 April 1961;
G-1-3(a)-1: Bryce written note, undated
(24 January 1962?); also Interviews.
35. G-1-3(a)-1: R.G. Robertson to P.M., 31 July
1963.
36. Sevigny, This Game, p. 254.
37. C-20-9(1): Hodgson to Walker, 2 October
1959.

38. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
39. G-1-26(b): Hodgson to Bryce, 27 March 1961.
40. C-20-9(d): passim.
41. C-20-9(i): Diefenbaker to Fleming, 23 October 1957.
42. G-1-10(a): "DBD" to Wall, 5 June 1961.
43. G-2-7(a): Charpentier to Gaskell, 23 November 1962.
44. G-1-7(a) and G-1-7(d): passim.
45. C-20-5: passim.
46. Interview
47. C-1-13: Record of Decision for 31 July 1961.
48. Interview
49. Interviews
50. Interview
51. Interviews generally.
52. Interview
53. Interview; also Sevigny, This Game, p. 156.
54. Footnote #47 above.
55. C-23: cross-reference to Cabinet Conclusions of 19 September 1957.
56. L-1-7(n): passim.
57. C-20-9(m): cross-reference to Cabinet Conclusions of 14 July 1958.
58. C-20-9(o) and N-40: passim.
59. C-1-18: passim; G-1-26: Heeney to Glassco, 17 October 1960.

60. Interview
61. E-20-3(d): Record of Decision for 24 September 1957.
62. R-25-3: Agenda for meeting of 1 December 1958.
63. P-1-6(c): Record of Decision for 11 April 1960.
64. R-11-1(d)-V: passim.
65. Interview
66. G-1-3(b): Record of Decision for 14 November 1960.
67. G-1-26: Records of Decision for 14 and 15 September 1960.
68. Interviews
69. House of Commons Debates, 25 March 1959, p. 2235.
70. Interview
71. Interview
72. Interview
73. Interview
74. P-50-2: Hill to Bryce, 19 June 1957.
75. Interview
76. Interview
77. Interview
78. P-20-1: Bryce to P.M., 6 July 1957.
79. C-20-9(e): "JF" to Bryce, 23 September 1959.
80. G-1-7(d): Hodgson to Bryce, 25 June 1962.
81. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.
82. D-1-8(h): "RBC" to Bryce, 24 April 1963.

83. C-20-9(e): "JF" to Bryce, 23 September 1959.
84. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.
85. Interview; also G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960; C-20-9(1): Hodgson to Walker, 2 October 1959.
86. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.
87. G-1-7(d): Hodgson to Bryce, 25 June 1962.
88. E.g. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960; C-20-9(1): Bryce to P.M., 18 December 1958. Also see House of Commons Debates, 19 December 1962, p. 2819.
89. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.
90. N-1-3(a): Bryce to P.M., 30 September 1960.
91. C-20-9(i): Diefenbaker to Fleming, 23 October 1957.
92. Figures compiled from list dated 18 November 1960 in G-1-7(d).
93. G-1-9(f): Bryce to Hill and Hodgson, 6 January 1962.
94. Interview; and D-18-1: unsigned, undated note (6 October 1959?).
95. P-20-1: Record of Decision for 24 November 1959.
96. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
97. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.
98. Ibid.
99. F-1-16(a): Bryce to Nowlan, 7 August 1962.
100. Interview
101. G-10-(a)-1: "AL" to Chevrier, 5 September 1963.
102. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.

103. E.g. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960; F-1-16(a): Bryce to Nowlan, 7 August 1962.
104. D-1-18(h): "RBC" to Bryce, 17 August 1962.
105. D-18-1: unsigned, undated note (6 October 1959?).
106. C-20-9(e): "JF" to Bryce, 23 September 1959.
107. R-7: Bryce to J.S. Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
108. P-20-1: Record of Decision for 24 November 1959.
109. E.g. L-1-7(n): Record of Decision for 12 August 1960.
110. Interviews
111. C-20-9(j): Cunningham to A. Hamilton, 9 June 1958.
112. N-40: R. Martin, "Memorandum for the Cabinet Committee on National Energy Board Legislation", 28 November 1958.
113. Interview
114. Interviews
115. D-1-6: Milligan to Bryce, 22 April 1963.
116. D-1-6: Bryce to R. Martin, 2 December 1960.
117. E.g. T-1-20: Laframboise to Head of Economic Division, Department of External Affairs, 25 May 1963.
118. P-10: Bryce to Foulkes, 16 May 1958.
119. D-1-8(h): Bryce to Harkness, 2 March 1962.
120. Interview
121. C-1-18: Fleming to Bryce, 21 March 1960.
122. Interview; also House of Commons Debates, 8 May 1959, p. 3503.

123. Interviews
124. Interviews
125. Interview
126. Interview
127. Years of Achievement, p. 312.
128. Interview
129. E.g. P-1-6(c): passim; also D-18-1:
unsigned, undated note (October 1959?); also
C-20-9(e): "JF" to Bryce, 23 September 1959.
130. Interview
131. G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M., 9 February 1960.
132. Interview; also G-1-7(a): Bryce to P.M.,
9 February 1960; compare Diefenbaker, Years
of Achievement, p. 312.
133. Interview
134. C-20-9(1): Hodgson to Walker, 2 October
1959.
135. T-1-13-M1(a)-1(b): passim.
136. T-2-7(c): passim.
137. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960.
138. Interview
139. F-1-16(c): passim.
140. F-2-1(c)-4: passim.
141. Interview; see also House of Commons Debates,
22 January 1963, p. 2991.
142. Interview
143. T-1-13-M1(a)-1(b): Record of Decision for
5 November 1960; also F-2-1(c)-4: passim.
144. T-2-7(c): passim, 1962.

145. Interview
146. C-20-9(1): Hodgson to Walker, 2 October 1959.
147. House of Commons Debates, 4 March 1960, p. 1766.
148. C-20-9(1): Hodgson to Walker, 2 October 1959.
149. Interview
150. F-1-16(e): Notes for Cabinet Committee on Long Term Measures, 17 September 1962.
151. See F-1-16(e): Cabinet Document #333-62, 11 October 1962.
152. The picture of this committee was built up from various sources: F-1-16(a): passim; Interviews; also see A. Hamilton in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 231-2, and Nicholson, Vision, pp. 106-7.
153. Interview
154. Interview
155. Interview
156. Interview
157. See Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 213-15, 231-2.
158. F-16(a): unsigned to Sevigny, 24 June 1960. However, a reference in Hansard may imply there was a second, smaller but separate committee on unemployment chaired by Sevigny and including Starr amongst others (House of Commons Debates, 29 July 1960, pp. 7248, 7251-2).
159. F-1-16(a): unsigned, undated note (18 October 1960?).
160. Interview

161. Interview

162. D-1-6: Milligan to Bryce, 22 April 1963.

XVI PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (Diefenbaker)

1. By 1979, briefing books prepared by P.C.O. during each election campaign included a thick one on "Proposals for Adjustments to the Structure and Machinery of Government".
2. E.g. Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 233.
3. Interview
4. G-1-10(a): Bryce to Wall, 25 January 1962.
5. P-51-1: Bryce to file, 10 April 1958.
6. G-1-26(b): 21 February 1961.
7. G-1-10(a): Wall to Mansbridge, 26 February 1963.
8. G-1-11-B1: Record of Decision for 12 February 1963 (dated 19 March 1963).
9. G-1-10(h)-3: Bryce to Dyck, 20 February 1963 (also Government of Canada Telephone Books).
10. Ibid.
11. Interview
12. Interview
13. Interview; also Newman, Renegade, pp. 82-3; Guest in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 181-2.
14. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959. Interesting comparisons are with Robertson, "Changing Role", and P.C.O., Submissions, part 4.
15. Interview
16. G-1-26(b): Draft "Statement of Functions", 16 February 1961.
17. House of Commons Debates, 23 March 1962, p. 2137; also C-20-7: Notes for a speech by Bryce, 19 September 1956.

18. G-1-3(a)-1: R.G. Robertson to P.M., 31 July 1963.
19. G-1-7(d): Bryce to P.M., 19 October 1960;
G-1-7(a)-3-c: Bryce to Walker, 19 April 1960.
20. P-51-2(a): Bryce to Dwyer, 24 July 1957.
21. Similar considerations played a part in the replacements of Marcel Massé in 1980 and P.M. Pitfield in 1979, though the latter was clearly in part political and the former could be read as such.
22. G-1-7(a): passim 1960-63.
23. T-2-7(c): Hodgson to Bryce, 13 August 1962.
24. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
25. Interview
26. Interview
27. Interview
28. Interview
29. G-1-7(a)-5: Gaskell to Bryce, 14 March 1963.
30. Interview
31. Interview
32. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
33. Interviews generally; also Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 233, and quoted in Hockin, Apex of Power, p. 251.
34. Interview; following quotes from interviews too.
35. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959, also Interviews.
36. In Hockin, Apex of Power, p. 251.

37. Interview; only with Prime Minister Clark (1979-80) was the term "Chief of Staff" applied to the head of the P.M.O.
38. Interviews
39. Interview
40. Interview
41. D-70: Fulton to Bryce, undated (June 1959)
42. C-20-5: Cabinet Documents, passim.
43. D-1-8(h)-M: agenda for 19 October 1962;
F-1-16(a): passim 1961.
44. P-51-1(b), and G-1-10(a)-5: passim.
45. E.g. P-20-1: Record of Decision for 24 November 1959.
46. G-1-26(b): material for Glassco Commission, 21 April 1961.
47. Ibid.
48. E.g. L-1-7(k): Bryce to P.M., 27 February 1961.
49. Interviews
50. R-7: Bryce to Mordecai, 2 December 1959.
51. C-20-2: Bryce to P.M., 18 October 1957.
52. G-1-9(e)-1: Notes for lecture by Bryce, 10 November 1961.
53. Interview
54. Interview
55. Interview

XVII CIVIL SERVICE (Diefenbaker)

1. Interview. Also see P. Martin in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 145.
2. Interviews
3. Interview
4. Years of Achievement, p. 44.
5. In Strusberg, Leadership Gained, Dinsdale p. 147, Churchill p. 146; compare Hees p. 146.
6. Interview
7. Following quotes from several: interviews reflect interviews generally.
8. A fascinating study could compare, in some detail, the approaches to and relations with officials of the 1957-63 Diefenbaker Ministry and the short-lived 1979-80 Clark Ministry.
9. C-20-9(a): Bryce to Martin, 9 June 1959.
10. D-18-1: Pearkes to P.M., 3 September 1959.
11. Interview
12. Interview
13. Interview
14. Interview
15. Interviews. Also fn. #5.
16. Interview
17. Interviews. Compare Diefenbaker in Hockin, Apex of Power (2nd edition), p. 251.
18. Interviews. Also O'Leary in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, pp. 145-6.
19. Interview. Other e.g. in Sevigny, This Game, pp. 133, 190.

20. Interviews
21. Interviews
22. D-1-6: Milligan to Bryce, 22 April 1963; also C-20-7: passim 1957-8.
23. Interview
24. Interview
25. Interviews
26. G-1-26(b): material for Glassco Commission, 21 April 1961.
27. C-1-18: Bryce to Fleming, 19 January 1960.
28. Interview
29. Interview
30. Interview
31. G-1-26(b): paper on Cabinet Committee on Emergency Plans, 1 January 1961.
32. Interview
33. Interview
34. G-1-7(d): R.G. Robertson to P.M., 9 August 1963.
35. Interview
36. Interview
37. E.g. Dinsdale in Stursberg, Leadership Gained, p. 147.
38. Interview
39. Interviews
40. Interview

XVIII CONSEQUENCES (Diefenbaker)

1. Cf. Chapt. I, pp. 15-16.
2. Interview
3. Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 40.
4. Debates, 18 July 1959, pp. 6361-2.
5. Interview
6. F-1-16(e): Cabinet Document #333-62, 11 November 1962, and passim.
7. As fostered by Newman, Renegade, e.g. p. 92.
8. Interview
9. Interviews
10. Diefenbaker, Years of Achievement, p. 312.

XIX CONCLUSIONS

1. Chapter I, p. 7.
2. Mallory quoted in Chapter I, p. 38.
3. Chapter IX, p. 58.
4. Mallory, Structure, p. 170.
5. Eg. p. 281 above; Pearson, Mike, vol III: pp. 97, 231-2; or Jack Davis in Hansard, 22 January 1963 (1962-3, p. 2991).
6. Eg. Joan Cohen, "Who Runs Ottawa?" part 2, Ottawa Citizen, 28 August, 1979; also "New Cabinet System not Working" by W.A. Wilson, Ottawa Journal, 14 November 1978.
7. Moby Dick (Penguin edition), p. 469: "There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method".
8. D.N. Chester, "Machinery of Government and Planning", in G.D.N. Worswick, P.H. Ady (eds), The British Economy 1945-1950 (Oxford, 1952), p. 361.
9. Eg. R.M. Punnett quoted in Chapter VII, p. 175.
10. Chapter X, p. 218.
11. Chapter I, pp. 12-13.
12. S.E. Finer quoted in Chapter I, p. 17.
13. The Canadian Public Service.
14. C.J. Friedrich, Constitutional Government, p. 361.
15. C.f. Chapter I, pp. 17-18.
16. One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch, pp. 66-7.
17. Interviews. A self-criticism touching these lines is in PCO Submissions to the Lambert Commission, #4, pp. 4-18 to 4-20.
18. P. Gordon Walker, The Cabinet, pp. 26-33.
19. Chapter I, pp. 39-41.
20. E.g. Chapter XV, pp. 302-3, fn. #10.

21. G.B. Doern, "The Cabinet and Central Agencies", pp. 39-40.
22. See Privy Council Office, Cabinet Paper System (Ottawa, 1977).
23. Interview (P. Martin).
24. E.g. Friedrich, Constitutional Government, pp. 49, 398.
25. Administrative Theories and Politics, pp. 28 and 27.
26. A.H. Hanson, M. Walles, Governing Britain (London, 1970), p. 97.
27. Submissions to Lambert Commission, #1, p. 16.
28. p. 263 above.
29. Interview (Diefenbaker).

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All researchers into cabinet structure or cabinet activities must face the same fundamental problem of a shortage of primary information. This is especially so for relatively recent periods when the relevant primary material is normally under close lock and key; in this context "recent" is defined by reference to the number of years for which this secrecy is maintained - in Canada, thirty years. Legislation providing for a right of access to government files, within certain conditions, could shed some light into previously shadowy corners but is unlikely to apply to more than a few files bearing on the work of the Canadian cabinet.

Moreover, the passage of time by itself has not yet mitigated this problem to a significant degree in Canada. Substantial files on cabinet activities only began to be kept with the formation of the cabinet secretariat in 1940, and until 1946 the files reflect the extraordinary circumstances of war-time. Only a few years separate that date from the thirty year curtain; when work began on this thesis even that gap did not exist. And where primary material is available to researchers, little bears upon cabinet structure as compared to prominent personalities and salient issues. Finally, aside altogether from closed files and scarce published reminiscences, thirty years is enough time for most participants in cabinets' work to have lost interest or died.

The nature of this problem was noted in Chapter I (pages 25-29). The bibliography outlines the essential material to which access was obtained and through which this study dealt with the problems of information. While a wide variety of materials may touch upon cabinet activities simply because the cabinet is obviously at the centre of Canadian government and politics, the sources and works listed are those which, for one reason or another, have been found most useful.

A) Unpublished Sources

1) Files of the Privy Council Office

The files of the Privy Council Office are the fundamental and indispensable basis for this thesis. Special access to PCO files concerning matters of cabinet and ministerial organization and structure was approved by the then Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet. In practice this access covered a potentially large number of files, since exploration of structure and methods could and did lead to widely scattered references.

This access was subject to strictures of confidentiality as necessary according to the provisions governing access to government files, embodied in Cabinet Directive #46 (Transfer of Public Records to the Public Archives and access to Public Records held by the Public Archives and by Departments). A first concrete condition was that the resulting manuscript was to be submitted to the Secretary to the Cabinet who could require the amendment of any unduly revealing passages citing PCO documents. In fact there was no censorship either of results or of citations. Indeed the PCO officers asked to take an interest in the research were more than helpful and consistently open. An application for dispensation from the standard Oxford provisions for unrestricted consultation of theses was necessary, and subsequent publication would require a second assessment of my use of PCO references.

A second restriction was a natural bar against access to actual cabinet and cabinet committee minutes, as agreed in advance. This is much less serious for a study of cabinet structure than for one tracing cabinet policies, especially since the results of infrequent cabinet discussions of structural matters are reflected elsewhere.

The amount of material included in this access was very substantial, although it was not nearly so voluminous or comprehensive as similar material generated in the 1970s. The chief difficulty with the material was that it generally demonstrated, not surprisingly, a focus upon individual problems and particular circumstances rather than upon the compilation of material useful in the longer term. There was a certain inconsistency in the records so that comparisons in most cases had to be of points or instances rather than through series of data.

As a matter of information, it may be recognized from the footnotes that the PCO filing system changed in 1960. Both before and after 1960 each broad series of files is identified by a capital letter followed by a number; subdivisions are identified by further numbers or letters (normally small letters bracketed). Each file subject is then further divided as necessary into actual files by period, often years but sometimes (especially more recently) only months. Before 1960 these principles were established but the numbering system was still evolving. The most useful series was C-20 on the cabinet generally; within that series, C-20 (v. 2) was at first "Cabinet - Organization and Procedures", but this designation was later modified in favour of C-20-7. Similarly, the C-20-9 series included the main cabinet committees (e.g. C-20-9 (a) as the Cabinet Defence Committee), but in the earlier years many committees were listed in the C-10 series (e.g. C-10-5 as the

Wheat Committee). Throughout many committees were listed in other series or for one reason or another did not receive a file separate from the subject file.

A new numbering system was introduced in 1960, based on a similar progression of letters and numbers in series but focusing somewhat more on subjects than institutions, and taking progressions further. Thus G-1 was broadly "Government", G-1-3 was "Parliament", and G-1-3(a)-1 was the Cabinet Committee on Legislation. The most useful series was G-1-7, on the Cabinet, and within that class G-1-7(a), on the "Cabinet, Organization and Procedure". The G-1-10 series dealt with the Privy Council Office, and G-1-7(d) with cabinet committees generally: but again many specific committees were recorded according to primary subject (e.g. D-1-6 dealt with the Cabinet Defence Committee). A greater variety of file series was found useful after 1960 than before.

2) Interviews

The new documentary evidence was fundamental but it required supplementation: something more was needed to put flesh on the bones. The second basis for the thesis was a series of interviews with former ministers and officials close to the cabinet.

Fifty-four interviews were conducted, about equally divided between the St. Laurent and Diefenbaker administrations, with twenty-eight participants and another dozen or more close observers (in several cases a participant could be put in two or more categories). Follow-up discussions took place with about half of those interviewed. Each interview was sought and conducted upon the basis of confidentiality; there was to be no public attribution of interview sources.

An effort was made in requesting interviews to achieve some cross-section of status and points of view in each government. Aside from obvious limiting factors of accessibility, special emphasis was put upon approaching subjects who could be expected to be particularly able and willing to contribute perceptively and frankly. The interviews took the form of discussions rather than questionnaires, with the aim of engaging the subject's own interest, and the discussions were recorded only in my own notes. Several people in fact expressed degrees of hostility to questionnaires; one who at first actually suggested use of a tape recorder was clearly more at ease when it was turned off. The questions were open-ended, the avenues of interest were various, and the times of the interviews varied from half an hour to five hours. Of course none of those

interviewed would necessarily agree with the way in which the two cabinets have been described nor with this study's analysis and interpretation.

B) Printed Sources

A distinction between primary and secondary sources was not always workable. For example, some articles were prepared by civil servants for publication in learned journals or elsewhere partly to provide a "primary" source in the public domain. The distinction adopted here is between official and secondary printed sources. The former includes printed records and other official publications and reports; the latter includes attributed articles by civil servants and ministers as well as works by academic and other observers. Since the fundamental sources for this study are P.C.O. files and interviews, printed sources listed here include those found most useful and those cited for specific references, but not all sources which might touch upon subjects to which reference is made. Other general references are given in footnotes especially to Chapter I.

1) Official

a) House of Commons Debates

- information on cabinet structure scattered and infrequent, often indirect, but provides very useful and practical political views

b) Government Reference Works

- Government of Canada Telephone Books (published more or less annually 1948-1963)
(a useful source for PCO organization and personnel)
- Organization of the Government of Canada (published annually)
(useful summary of organization and functions of departments and main non-departmental bodies, over time)
- Public Archives of Canada, Guide to Canadian Ministries Since Confederation, July 1, 1867 - April 1, 1973 (Ottawa, 1974; revised edition forthcoming)
(irreplaceable reference to individual ministries and to particular ministers' careers)

c) Reports

- Royal Commission on Government Organization (Glassco Report), 5 volumes (Ottawa, 1962-3)
(little on cabinet structure but useful background, especially vols. I and V)

- Sir George Murray, Report on the Organization of the Public Service of Canada (Ottawa, 1912); printed separately and in "Sessional Papers" (Canada), vol. XLVII, 1913, No. 27. (pithy and, though dated, fingers continuing concerns)
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d) Other

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