

The Prime Minister & His Cabinet

The Prime Minister:

The Prime Minister occupies an unique position in British governmental system. He is the leader of the majority party in the House of Commons, the head of government and principal advisor to the King. He chooses all other members of his cabinet and at any time call upon any member to resign. He distributes the portfolios among the ministers and reshuffles any member of his cabinet. In short the British Prime Minister is one of the strongest head of government in the world due to his multiple positions. It is said about the British system that the Monarch is the master of the country and the Prime Minister is the master of his government. Infact, the Britain is not governed by the Monarch but by the Prime Minister.

Election of Prime Minister:

British Prime Minister is not only elected by the electorates and by the members of the Parliament but he is also elected himself by his talents, his efforts, and achievements during his long course of political career in Parliament, politics and government. In his long-drawn process, several influences and factors come to play their role in the choice of a prime minister. The most important among them are the voters of his country and the members of his party in the House of Commons.

The British Prime Minister is appointed by the King. This means, he is choice of the King, who normally chooses as Prime Minister any elected member of Parliament, who is the recognized leader of the majority party in the House of Commons. The choice of Prime Minister is automatic. The person, who is the leader of the majority party in the House of Commons is invited by the Monarch to 'become' the Prime Minister and to form the government. But sometime the choice of the Prime Minister can, present complication when incumbent dies in office or he resigns for personal reasons and

the majority party has no recognized leader. In that case, the monarch has an absolute right to consult and summon any one he pleases.

Actually choice of Prime Minister is influenced by the activities outside the House of Commons. The choice of leader of a political party is the choice of prime minister, if the party emerges as majority party in the House of Commons. The leader of the party is necessarily summoned by the King to be appointed as Prime Minister.

The choice of the Prime Minister also, lies with the voters in the country at large. Only when a party leader has won the election he becomes the prime minister. The voters decide between the leaders of two parties who will rule them for the next five years. The class structure of voters determine the choice of the Prime Minister. The middle class voters always vote for the leader of Conservative Party, while the working class voters for the Labour Party and its leader. Moreover, the economic factor plays more dominant role in the choice of the Prime Minister by the English voters, than the ideological factors. The leader, who has the capacity to produce economic well-being of all the classes, is more likely to be elected as Prime Minister, that is why the Conservative Party leader i.e., Sir Douglas-Home has won the election in 1963.

After the election as member of House of Commons, the leader of the majority party is considered the leader of the parliamentary party in the House. After being appointed as Prime Minister, he assumes the title of the leader of the House of Commons, and behaves himself as the Prime Minister of England.

Powers and Functions:

The Prime Minister of England is very important man, who is responsible for running the whole show. He enjoys many powers and performs many functions, which are as under;

1. **Leader of Cabinet:** The Prime Minister is the leader of his cabinet, which is the actual ruling authority of the country. After his appointment as Prime Minister, he chooses the members of his

cabinet and forms the ministry. He distributes portfolios among them. He presides over the meeting of the cabinet and controls its agenda. He has free hand in choosing the ministers to find a homogenous cabinet. He can ignore the prominent members of his party out of his cabinet, as Chamberlain kept Mr. Churchill out of his cabinet. He may force any minister to resign, if he does not see eye to eye with him. He has the last word in the making policy of the cabinet. If any minister disagree with the Prime Minister's view he has to resign from his ministry. The Prime Minister can advise the king to dismiss any minister, he likes. He may dismiss the whole cabinet or its a portion, as Mr. Macmillan dismissed en bloc seven cabinet ministers and nine other ministers and Lord Chancellor in 1962. In case the cabinet does not yield to his wishes, he may even threaten to resign which means the resignation of whole cabinet. Mr. **Ramsay Muir** demonstrated the same attitude in 1931. He is not only leader of the cabinet but also the chief of the majority party in the House, therefore, he wields immense influence over his colleagues, who indisputably submit to his wishes.

2. **Leader of House of Commons:** The Prime Minister is the leader of the House of Commons and makes all important announcements regarding the government's policy, in the House. He is the main spokesman of the cabinet and defines it in all political battles in the House. He speaks on all the important government measures in the House. As a leader of the House, the Prime Minister corrects the errors in the statements made by his colleagues. All the questions with regard to critical issues are always addressed to him. He speaks the final official word in the House. Thus, the Prime Minister guides and influences all the rules and regulations in the House of Commons.

3. **Principal Advisor of the King:** The Prime Minister is the main channel of communication between the Cabinet and the King. He conveys the decisions of the Cabinet to the King and conveys the King's messages to the Cabinet. He is main advisor of the king. He can recommend to the King not only in the affairs of the United Kingdom but also in the affairs of Common-wealth countries. He advises the King to summon, prorogue and dissolve the House of

Commons. He can advise the King to dissolve the House of Commons, before its normal term. Although every cabinet minister has right of access to the King, yet no minister approaches the King, without the premission of the Prime Minister.

4. **Determination of Foreign Policy:** The determination of foreign policy is main concern of the Prime Minister. He shapes and determines the foreign policy of England with other states of world. The Foreign Minister is the close friend of him, who consults him in all affairs. All international treaties and agreements are made on his initiative and he gets signed and ratified all such treaties. The Prime Minister may occasionally attend the international conferences, as Lord Beaconsfield attended Berlin Conference, Lloyd George took part in Paris Conference and Mr. Chamberlain participated in Munich Conference. The Prime Minister presides over the Conference of Prime Ministers of Common-wealth Countries.

5. **Control over Finance:-** The Prime Minister also exercises enough control over national purse. The chancellor of Exchequer is the close friend of him, who informs him about all the financial affairs of the country. Although the annual budget is prepared by the Chancellor of Exchequer, yet he consults the Prime Minister for general policy and each and every items of the budget.

6. **Fountain of Honour:-** The Prime Minister enjoys vast patronage both in Government and the Church. He appoints a number of officials like ambassadors and other diplomatic and domestic representatives. He recommends to the King for awards of all titles and honours for the distinguished persons in society.

7. **Settlement of Departmental Disputes:-** The Prime Minister exercises control over all departments and settles the disputes which may arise among the various departments. He creates the spirit of harmony and cooperation among various organs of the government. He can change the portfolios from one minister to other as he like fit. He plays the role of impartial judge and supplies the cementing force in running the administration smoothly. Thus, he is chief coordinator of policies and general manager of the governmental organization.

Position of Prime Minister:-

The powers and functions of the Prime Minister justify the remark of *Marriot* that he is the political ruler of England. He is endowed with such a plentitude of power as no other constitutional ruler in the world possesses, not even the President of America. For so long as his party commands a majority in the House of Commons, he can give a pledge beforehand that such and such treaty will be signed, such and such law will be passed and such and such amount of money will be sanctioned. Thus, the formal powers of the Prime Minister compare very favorably to those of an autocrat. The prerogatives, which the King has lost in the course of history have fallen in the hands of the Prime Minister in the position of his being the principal adviser of the King. The Prime Minister enjoying the support of a stable majority in the House can make amend and repeal the law and Constitution of England, can impose any amount of taxation and can declare war and conclude peace. During national emergency, he becomes a virtual dictator of the country. The Cabinet is the real government of the country and he is the master of the Cabinet.

The powers of the Prime Minister, as a matter of fact, depend upon the personality of the person holding this office. Men like Disraeli, Gladstone, Peel, Churchill and Thactcher proved to be successful prime ministers and added much to the prestige and dignity of this office. But a weak prime minister may lose much of the position and dignity of this office.

Prime Minister as First among the equals:

The position of Prime Minister in relation to other ministers was described during the 19th century as *primus inter pares*, i.e., the first among equals. It is no more true today. He is the master of the Cabinet. In essentials, the policy of the Cabinet is his policy. He is the moon among lesser stars. Another philosopher says that he is the sun round which the planets revolve, of course, he cannot be a dictator. Though he exercises a general supervision, he cannot dictate arbitrarily to his colleagues, who hold an equally important position in the party. He is under the constant criticism of the opposition. He

is to pull his colleagues in the Cabinet and majority in the legislation which him. All this means that he cannot be called a dictator or an autocrat despite the fact that at times he may wield dictatorial powers.

The Prime Minister is not a Dictator:

Those who say that the Prime Minister is fast becoming a dictator give these arguments. (i) He can ask any minister to resign. (ii) He can ask the Queen to dissolve the House of Commons. (iii) He can resign himself, his resignation will mean the resignation of the Cabinet. When we read these points we generally get the impression that the Prime Minister is a dictator. But the fact of the matter is that he is not a dictator. When he acts like that, he risks his powers and position.

- (i) He can ask any minister to resign but in practice there are the following difficulties: (a) Resignation of a minister may cause rift in the Party, Cabinet and the Parliament. (b) No party has unlimited talents to be supplied to the Prime Minister. (c) The people have no faith in the Cabinet, which changes every now and then.
- (ii) He can ask the Queen to dissolve the House of Commons but he may not be able to do it due to the reasons given below. ,
 - (a) Fresh election means expense of millions of Pounds. No party is always ready with huge sums to spend.
 - (b) The opinion polls always do not show that he is likely to win the election.
 - (c) No Prime Minister can be 100% sure of the victory of his party at the polls. Election means many sleepless nights for the leadership and the workers. So, no Prime Minister will invite elections. He will hold it when he has to.
- (iii) The Prime Minister can resign himself. It will lead to the resignation of the Cabinet. This is true in theory but not in practice as the number two in the Cabinet is always ready and eager to step into his shoes.

- (a) Mr. Lloyd George has said, that there is no generosity at the top, there is always someone willing even eager, to take his place.
- (b) He can never say like Clement VII, "Now that we have got the Papacy let us enjoy it."
- (c) "The Parliamentary system is conducted on the vital hypothesis that no man is indispensable, and its daily operation is a constant and salutary reminder to the Prime Minister that his fortune depends upon his recognition of this truth", says *Prof. Laski*.

The Prime minister is not a dictator; he is first among the equals or little more than this. We will say in the end that wherever there is a parliamentary form of government the general election has become the election of the Prime Minister. Very often the party is spoken of a party of such and such Prime Minister.

As conclusion it can be said that the Prime Minister of England is endowed with vast powers. He is the head of the cabinet, which is the real executive. He exercises supreme control over the foreign policy of England. In fact he is the real ruler and political head of the state. His position mostly depends upon his personality, courage initiative and vision, yet he is not dictator.

THE CABINET

The Cabinet is at present, ^{decided} ^{usually consists of 20 to 25 ministers} composed of 20 to 25 ministers, who are selected by the Prime Minister and appointed by the King or the Queen. ^{decided} The size of the cabinet varies from time to time, but number of the ministers is finally ^{decided} by the Prime Minister. At first the Cabinet used to consist of seven members. Then, in the beginning of 19th century its size increased to strength of cabinet and in the beginning of 20th century its number raised to twenty-one members. By the end of Second World War its membership again reduced to eighteen. Since 1973, the number of the Cabinet member is 20 to 25. According to *Prof. Munro* the Cabinet is a body of royal advisers chosen by the Prime Minister in the name of Crown, with the approval of majority in the House of Commons.

The Cabinet stands at the apex of the British Government. Although it is the child of the Parliament yet it controls the Parliament. It has grown out of a series of accidents and fortuitous events. It is based on conventions. It enjoys the support of majority in the House of Commons. Once a cabinet comes into power it cannot be ousted by vote of no-confidence. In the case of defeat, the Prime Minister may dissolve House of Commons, and appeal to the electorates by means of new election, or he may decide to resign. If he resigns, the Queen may ask the leader of the opposition to form the Cabinet. In 1895, the last cabinet of Liberals was ousted out.

The Cabinet controls the legislative measures in the House as it formulates, initiates and defends the legislation. The approval of legislation can not be refused by the Houses. The private members bills can be introduced in the House, which have a very little chance of success, as they are not supported by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet also enjoys full control over state finance as the budget is prepared by the Chancellor of Exchequer and is approved by the Cabinet for the presentation of budget in the House of Commons. The private members may propose some amendments in the budget proposal, which are rarely carried.

The Cabinet can make treaties with the world states without the previous consultation of the Parliament. Once a treaty is signed by the Cabinet, it becomes valid. The Cabinet can make secret commitments with other governments and can take any military action, as it did in the case of Suez-Canal.

In short the Cabinet has taken over all the functions of the Parliament. It has enhanced to its position vis-à-vis the House of Commons. The following are the reasons of the growing strength of the Cabinet at the cost of House of Commons:--

Cabinet's dictatorship: Causes:

1. Party Discipline:-

The main reason of Cabinet dictatorship lies in the growth of rigid party discipline. In the 19th century, the parties were not so well organized as these are today. The number of voters used to be

very small and candidates would contest election independently. They were not thus pledged to the support of any party government. There was therefore, a good deal of a free voting in the House of Commons. The ministers, were considered to be hired functionaries, and could be dismissed whenever their policy was not liked by the House. This position has changed altogether now on account of the introduction of universal franchise. The number of voters has increased immensely. The constituencies have become big. The cost of electioneering has increased. Now it is not within the means of an independent candidate to approach the voters and canvass for himself. Independent electioneering has thus become difficult. In order to be successful, it is therefore, essential that one should be the member of one party or another. On account of the increased dependence of a person on party, party discipline and organization have become very rigid. The members of a party are pledged to its support under all circumstances. Inside the House, they are bound by discipline to vote in favour of the party. Voting against the party is regarded as breach of discipline, for which a person is liable to be expelled from the party. Expulsion from the party is considered to be political death. The fear of disciplinary action keep the members tongue-tied and they do not oppose the party leadership even if they do not see eye to eye with them. All this means that once a certain party wins majority and it forms the Cabinet, it will continue in office without any fear and fright. The members of the party will blindly support the cabinet. Loyalty to the party makes a person a part of the party machine. Thus the party, by virtue of its majority, gets the power which technically belong to the whole Parliament. A private member of the House is more or less an imposing cypher. If he is an independent member, his views, however fine and true, cut no ice; if he belongs to a party, he votes it whether he likes its policies or not.

2 Power of Dissolution:

The second factor which has strengthened the Cabinet is its power to get the House of Commons dissolved before the expiry of its normal term. The Prime Minister can request the King for dissolution of the House, which is always acceded to by the King.

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The Cabinet can thus easily dump the enthusiasm of the members who want to revolt against it. Dissolution means a new general election. The sitting members do not want it. They would like to enjoy the membership of the House for its full term. In case of an earlier dissolution, they will have to seek re-election which involves a lot of expenditure, and botheration. Above all, one may not be certain of being re-elected. Threat of an earlier dissolution not only binds the majority party but also it cools down the zeal of the opposition. Thus according to *Keith* "apart from party loyalty, the Cabinet possesses over its follower and to some extent over the opposition, a powerful weapon in the possibility of securing a dissolution of Parliament".

3. Two-party System:

Another factor which has contributed to the strength of the Cabinet is the two-party system which prevails in England. The parties dominating the political life of England at present are the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. These two parties are poles apart so far as their ideals and objectives are concerned. As a matter of principle it is difficult for a member of the party-in-power to cross the floor and join the opposition even if he has certain difference with Cabinet on a particular issue. After all, the Cabinet of his own party is nearer to him than the opposition. It is, therefore rare that a government supporter may vote against it.

4. Delegated Legislation:

The House of Commons has to deal with very heavy work. Being hard pressed for time it has little opportunity or leisure to scrutinize every detail of administration. So it is forced to leave a good deal of work to the Cabinet, through delegated legislation and Orders-in-Council. It simply passes various Bills in broad outlines and leaves the rest to be filled in by the executive. The new tendency has resulted in the enormous increase in the powers of the Cabinet and Civil Servants. Bureaucracy now makes all sorts of laws by way of Order-in-Council. There is justification in the remarks of *Ramsay Muir* that "an omnipotent Cabinet with the immense but concealed power of bureaucracy sheltered behind it is the dominating fact of the British system of government as it exists today."

5. Control over the Business of the House:

The rules of procedure in the House of Commons especially favour the Cabinet. Some seven-eighth of the time of the House is given over to Government bills. Understanding orders of the House, time allotted for the discussion of a private member's bill can be given over to a government measure.

6. Enhanced Importance of the Electorate:-

The spread of general education and political consciousness among the people are factors, which are also responsible for transfer of power from Parliament to the electorate. Before the beginning of 20th century, public opinion had very little opportunity for functioning. Now with the development of press and other rapid means of communication and publicity the public attention is at once focused on any problem facing the country. A speech of member in the Parliament is read by millions. Political organizations and associations at once met and pass resolutions holding out a treat or reward. Under the constant gaze of the electorate, the members of Parliament have lost that freedom of action which they once enjoyed.

7. National Emergencies:-

A series of national emergencies in England have also been responsible for strengthening the hands of the government in order to enable them to meet the situation and save the country. During the World War I (1914-18) huge powers were delegated to the then government. The period between the two wars (1918-39) was also characterized by various problems like industrial, labour unrest and the like. The National Government (1931-35) was given almost dictatorial powers. It could even impose duties without the consent of Parliament. During World War II again, the House had to concede a lot of powers to the government in the interest of public safety and security and for the purpose of prosecuting war successfully. Thus, we find that modern situation itself goes in favour of enhancing the powers of the cabinet. Parliament sovereignty is therefore, passing through a crisis and has lost its strength.

Criticism:-

“Civil service thrives behind the cloak of cabinet responsibility.” Said *Ramsay Muir*. Thus means that cabinet has neither the time nor the expertise to perform its functions well and hence these are performed by the civil servants in the name of the ministers. There are some other reasons for the weakness of the cabinet which are as following:--

1. Ministers are amateurs and do not have sufficient knowledge of governance. They spend their most of the time in attending meetings or on tours to their respective constitutioncies and have hardly time to acquire knowledge. Thus they have to depend on the advise of their civil servants.
2. The Cabinet meets once a week for two hours only. It is very short time to make the cabinet functions efficiently and effectively. Thus the cabinet has to mostly depend upon the civil service to facilitate to make its well thought decisions.
3. The Cabinet has to make highly technical policies such as defense, economic and foreign and ministers are amateurs and non-technical. Hence, there has been the need of effective use of experts and technocrats by the cabined while it is formulating the such policies. Thus it violates the principles of cabinet secrecy and responsibility.
4. The Cabinet is policy-formulating body. But it proved an unsatisfactory body for consistent and coordinated planning for future due to frequent change of governments, too huge body of cabinet and collective responsibility of the cabinet.
5. The Cabinet through its brief meetings and with its member burdened with departmental responsibility cannot adequately perform the function of bringing

Characteristics of Cabinet:

The following are the characteristics of the British Cabinet:--

1. Exclusion of Monarch:

The Monarch is not a part of the Cabinet and does not attend its meetings. It is a convention, which has developed during the reign of George I, who did not attend the meetings because he could not speak English. Moreover, Monarch is excluded from the cabinet due to his irresponsible position in the British Government.

2. Political homogeneity:

The Cabinet is politically homogenous as its members belong to same party holding the same political views. It was first established by Sir Robert Walpole during his period between 1721 to 1742. He established the precedent that any minister who did not agree with his view must resign and leave the cabinet. Since then it has become an essential feature of the cabinet system.

3. Collective responsibility:

The collective responsibility of the cabinet is another essential feature of the British Cabinet system. The Cabinet as a whole is responsible to the House of Commons for every policy or act, it takes. The Cabinet stands or falls together. It is answerable as a whole for an act of an individual minister. It falls together due to misdeed of its any member. The cabinet has dual responsibility i.e. political and legal. Politically it is responsible to the Parliament for its policies and legally it is responsible before the courts in case its acts are alleged to be illegal.

4. Close links with Parliament:

The cabinet is the child of the Parliament, or the Parliament is the mother of the cabinet. It has close relations with majority party of the House of Commons. The majority party elects its leader in the Parliament, who is appointed as the Prime Minister, who in his turn appoints the ministers from the members of his party in the

Parliament. Every member of the Cabinet must also be a member of one of the two Houses of the Parliament

5. Subordination to the Prime Minister:

All members of the Cabinet are subordinates to the Prime Minister, who is the main figure and head of the cabinet. The cabinet is formed or dismissed by the Prime Minister. An individual minister can retain his office till the pleasure of the Prime Minister; who is the defender of the cabinet before the House of Commons, before the people and before the Monarch. The Prime Minister organizes the cabinet and makes it work together as a team.

6. The Cabinet acts in secrecy:

Secrecy is the, essential feature of the Cabinet. The cabinet's decisions are kept in secret and are not made public for maintaining its unity, harmony and collective responsibility. From the practical point of view, secrecy is essential in the interest of full and frank discussion among its members. They can say anything without the danger of publicity, during the cabinet discussions.

Functions of the cabinet:

The Cabinet is the real executive of the country. Its main functions, as set out in the Report of *Lord Holdane's* Committee (1918) are as under:--

- (a) The final determination of the policy to be submitted to Parliament.
- (b) The supreme control of national executive in accordance with the policy prescribed by Parliament.
- (c) The continued coordination and delimitation of the authorities of the several departments of the British Government.

Some details of these functions are as follows:

1. Executive Functions:

- i. The Cabinet formulates the external and domestic policies of the government in the light of the declared policies of the political party to which it belongs.

- ii. The Cabinet is also responsible for planning for the future and it is the responsibility of each government to formulate policies by keeping in view the future needs of the nation. Considerations that may weigh with the cabinet in planning policy for the future are defence and security needs, energy requirements, needs to develop technological know how and the application in agro-industrial production, likely changes in population pattern and their socio-economic implications.
- iii. The cabinet coordinates the working of various departments. Normally several departments are involved in the formulation and implementation of a policy, whether it is the policy of raising the school leaving age, providing old age pension, free medical service, freezing the wages or raising bank rate. The cabinet acts as the coordinator between various departments.
- iv. The cabinet is the general policy framing, supervising and controlling body with very little time at its disposal to go into the details of every policy. Hence individual ministers have considerable freedom of action in matters, which are not of real political importance. It is the duty of the ministers to consult the cabinet. Certain matters are however, never discussed in the cabinet. These are the exercise of the prerogative of Mercy, the personnel of the cabinet, the making of appointments, the conferment of Honours.

2. Control over the National Finance.

The annual budget statement occupies a peculiar position. Although it is presented to the Parliament in the name of the cabinet, its principles or full proposals are neither circulated among cabinet members nor debated by them. It is disclosed to the cabinet orally a few days before it is presented in the House of Commons.

3. Legislative Functions.

In the early days the cabinet derived its importance mainly from the executive functions. But for the last hundred years, the cabinet has had so much to do with legislation that it seems to have become its principal functions. The cabinet prepares the address from the throne in which the cabinet sets forth its legislative programme at the opening of every parliamentary sessions. More than 95 percent of the bills passed by the Parliament are Government Bills prepared in the ministries. They are introduced, explained and defended in the Parliament by the ministers and with the support of the party members the cabinet gets them passed. As the cabinet enjoys the support of the majority in the House of Commons every bill introduced by it, is easily passed. That is why it said that now-a-days, it is the cabinet that legislates with the advice and consent of the Parliament.

The foregoing survey indicates that the cabinet exercises immensely large powers to every sphere. It is not only the real executive but has also assumed the role of 'little' or mini legislative. It formulates the policy, enforces the laws, runs the administration, makes important appointment, takes decisions on matters of war and peace, recommends titles to be awarded, prepares budget, initiates legislation and secures its passage. Thus the task of modern cabinet are important and has a huge responsibility to cope up with. In short the entire system of government revolves round the cabinet. In theory, the Cabinet is described as omnipotent, yet it is incapable to use its omnipotence to its democratic character. The Cabinet is democratic in character due to the presence of a vigilant opposition, political consciousness, public opinion and democratic conventions.

Cabinet & Ministry:

The cabinet should be clearly distinguished from the ministry. Broadly speaking there are three distinction between the Cabinet and the Ministry, which are:--

- i. The Ministry consists of a larger number of ministers than the Cabinet. All ministers are not Cabinet members. but only those ministers, who hold the

important administrative posts of political character are the Cabinet ministers. Thus, the Cabinet is smaller in size than the Ministry. The Cabinet consists of twenty ministers only, while the Ministry comprises of fifty-five to eighty ministers. Simply all the Cabinet members are ministers, while all the ministers are not Cabinet members.

- ii. The Cabinet is policy making body, while the Ministry is policy enforcing body. The Ministry has nothing to do with the policy-making, but it only implements the policies as laid down by the Cabinet.
- iii. The Cabinet acts as single body for transaction of business but the Ministry has no such collective entity and functions.

There are a number of posts which are automatically included in the cabinet and on the other hand there are some ministers who are not part of cabinet. Thus there are three kinds of ministerial office i.e. those, which are included in cabinet, those, which may be included in the cabinet and those, which are too junior to be included in the cabinet.

Those posts, which are included in the cabinet are Prime Minister, Chancellor of Exchequer, foreign, defence and energy secretaries, Lord Chancellor, Health Secretary and Leader of the House.

Those posts, which may be included in cabinet are Chief whip, National Heritage Secretary, Secretaries of transport and housing and party chairman.

Those posts, which are never included in the cabinet are all junior Ministers, Sport Minister and Local Government Minister.

Improvement of British Cabinet:

The following steps have been taken to improve the efficiency of the Cabinet in running the government:--

1. **Establishment of a permanent secretariat:**

In 1916 Mr. Lloyd George took the first step in the direction of establishing a permanent cabinet secretariat. Today it is a permanent body performing the following functions for the cabinet and its committees:

- (a) It circulates cabinet papers consisting of concise statements by the departments, memoranda, documents and recommendations as to action on matters coming up for discussion;
- (b) Prepares agendas;
- (c) Summons persons to attend meetings;
- (d) Records the essential points of discussions and the conclusions reached;
- (e) Circulates these decisions to the departments concerned.
- (f) Reports periodically on the implementation of decision; and
- (g) Promotes measures to remove friction between the departments.

The cabinet secretariat is also immense help to the Prime Minister in dealing with and coordinating the work of departments.

2. **The formation of committees containing experts:**

In view of the decisions that the cabinet was not making full and continuous use of experts, committees of specialists were appointed from time to time to undertake long term planning in the fields of defence and economic affairs.

A committee of Imperial Defence was appointed in 1904 which during the Second World War was absorbed in the war cabinet. In 1928 Mr. Baldwin appointed a committee for civil research under his own chairmanship. Other bodies were appointed to regulate economy. In spite of so many expert committees the main

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responsibility for policy formulation has remained that of the concerned ministry and on its suggestion that of the cabinet.

3. A reduction in the size of the cabinet.

There have been very small cabinets during war time and their members were divested of all departmental duties. The Haldane Committee in 1918 and Mr. L.S. Amery advocated small cabinets with no departmental ministers as members in peace time as well.

4. Cabinet Committees.

The credit of developing the system of cabinet committees goes to Mr. Atlee who used both of standing and special committees. Until 1992 the existence and importance of cabinet committees were never known. It had never been acknowledged that most of cabinet's work was carried out in committees. *John Major* published details in order to make his government more open.

There are two types of cabinets committees i.e Standing and Adhoc. The former are permanent and latter are temporary. The Adhoc committees carry the name MISC or GEN, followed by a number, which identifies them.

The Standing committees are further divided into two parts. The committees chaired by the Prime Minister for examples committees for Economic and Domestic Policy, Defence and Overseas Policy, Nuclear Defence Policy, European Security, Northern Ireland, Science and Technology and Intelligence Services. The committees chaired by ministers for examples committees for Industrial Commercial Consumers Affairs, Environment, Home and Social Affairs, Local Governments, Future Legislation Current Legislation, Civil Service Pay, Health, Drug Misuse, European Question, Terrorism, Urban Policy, Alcohol Misuse and Women's Issues.

