

First Minister Choices Regarding Cabinet Committees:
The Manitoba Experience, 1958 to 2021

By Chris Baker

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Political Studies
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

Copyright Chris Baker © June 2024

Abstract: This thesis examines the choices that first ministers make when choosing the cabinet committees that are part of their cabinet system. The study of cabinet committees is important because these committees are where much of the groundwork for decision-making in cabinet is done. Drawing on information from research as well as original interviews, the thesis addresses three research questions related to the use of cabinet committees under each of the premiers from 1958 to 2021. First, what was the structure of cabinet committees each premier employed? Second, what was the impact of these different structures on governance? Finally, how and why did the cabinet committee system change under each premier? By answering these questions, the thesis argues that the Manitoba experience with cabinet committees reveals that the essential approach to governance taken by each first minister can be derived from their choices concerning cabinet committees. The thesis also examines the use of backbench government members on cabinet committees.

Contents

Introduction	4
Research Approach	13
Statutory Authority	15
The Use of Private Members on Cabinet Committees	17
Types of Cabinet Committees	22
Treasury Board	24
Cabinet Committees Through the Years	27
The Roblin Years 1958-1967	28
The Weir Interregnum 1967-1969	30
The Schreyer Years 1969-1977	32
The Lyon Years 1977-1981	42
The Pawley Years 1981-1988	46
The Filmon Years 1988-1999	53
The Doer Years 1999-2009	59
The Selinger Years 2009-2016	63
The Pallister Years 2016-2021	67
Discussion and Conclusions	70
Bibliography	77
Interviews	79
APPENDIX	80

Introduction

Cabinet government is well-known, but little understood. There are general conventions that govern cabinet, such as the need for cabinet solidarity and the confidential nature of cabinet proceedings,¹ but there are many differences driven by the various personalities that are comprised within the executive in the Canadian political system. Each first minister has a different way of approaching how cabinet is to function within an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual responsibility.

As noted in his book *The Institutionalized Cabinet*, Christopher Dunn points out that there has been a significant change since the 1950s in how provincial cabinets generally function as the central executive in the Canadian political system. There has been a shift away from the unaided cabinet model, which emphasized informality and individual ministerial responsibility, to an institutionalized model, which emphasizes structure and teamwork.²

In the unaided approach, ministers have considerable autonomy for the way their departments act as part of government. As described by Dunn,

The unaided cabinet is simple in structure, with few standing committees, and features restricted collegiality (that is, limited collective decision making and power sharing as regards departmental policy). The prime minister or premier is the architect of personnel choice and is usually, but not always, the dominant politician. There are “central departments”: departments that perform service-wide facilitative and coordinative roles but are headed by a minister other than the premier. There are few cabinet-level staff. Budgeting has narrow aims—usually fiscal control predominates—and employs narrow means. Planning is seen as an optional, not essential, function of government in nature. The unaided cabinet promotes a decision-making style that

¹ Vogt, Paul, “The Manitoba Cabinet,” in *Manitoba Politics and Government*, Paul G. Thomas and Curtis Brown eds., (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 183

² Dunn, Christopher, *The Institutionalized Cabinet*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), 3.

features few sources of alternative advice to cabinet other than deputy ministers. Restricted collegiality is the order of the day.³

In the institutionalized model, in contrast, the first minister assumes more authority for the co-ordination of policy and decision-making. As stated by Dunn,

The institutionalized cabinet, on the other hand, has a complex cabinet structure with many standing committees and expanded collegiality (that is, greater collective decision making and power sharing as regards departmental policy). The prime minister or premier's role is expanded to include the responsibilities of organizational architect as well as architect of personnel choice. There are now both central departments and central agencies, the latter being those service-wide facilitative and coordinative bodies directly responsible to the prime minister or premier. Cabinet receives both partisan ("PMO-type") and policy/technocratic ("PCO-type") input...Decision making is more centralized in the structured cabinet; cabinet makes a wider range of decisions, and central bureaucrats monitor departments to a greater extent.⁴

As noted by Dunn, as the scope of government activities have grown since the 1950s, so has the need to coordinate the activities of government departments. With government policy starting to encompass more and more areas, the possibility of departments working in conflict also grew. The need for greater policy coherence and the desire to align all departmental activities in accordance with general government policy required the need for greater coordination among all departments of government.

Along with the increasing scope of government activity, the complexity of issues also grew. Instead of relying on the political judgement of individual ministers to manage the affairs of office, as in the unaided cabinet model, there was an increasing dependence on a public service that was becoming more professional. These public servants also became the repository

³ Dunn, Christopher, "Premiers and Cabinets," in *Provinces: Canadian Provincial Politics*, Third Edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2015) 336.

⁴ Ibid. 336.

of expertise in the relevant policy area. This professional body of public servants needed a way to communicate with each other to serve the interests of the government as a whole.

The need for more effective communication in this atmosphere of increasing scope and complexity drove the need for better coordination among the various players at the centre of government. Although this process began in the late 1950s, the need for greater communication and coordination within government continues to be a factor. Within the executive level of government, the first minister became the locus for this coordination. As cabinets became more institutionalized or structured, the need for supporting staff to monitor, manage, and record the interactions of departments grew. Most often, this staff was to be located within the department of the first minister which, in Manitoba as well as in other provinces, is the Executive Council Office (ECO). This is the provincial equivalent of the Privy Council Office (PCO), the department which serves the Prime Minister at the federal level.⁵

Determining cabinet structure is seen by Dunn (and others) as one of the chief tasks to be undertaken by a first minister.⁶ Other tasks include the selection of cabinet ministers and the selection of senior government officials. Cabinet is, at its heart, an informal body led by the first minister. In addition to being the executive body which directs the activities of government, the Manitoba cabinet is also a deliberative body, where the decisions facing

⁵ There is also the Prime Minister's Office or PMO which finds its general equivalent in the Premier's office. While the ECO offers advice on civil service matters, partisan matters are handled by the Premier's office staff.

⁶ Op cit. Dunn, *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. Page 9

government are brought forward for discussion. Time at cabinet meetings is limited and, given the increasing scope and complexity of issues it is expected to manage, increasingly valuable.⁷

The first minister is expected to manage the overall agenda for these meetings as well as the dynamics, personal and departmental, within government. The complexity of this task is aggravated by a number of factors, including the changing media landscape.

With the increasing need for the coordination of departmental activities, there needed to be a way to organize the work of cabinet so that it would be accommodated within the constitutional, legal, and financial limits of the decision-making process. To manage this agenda, first ministers have found it useful to use a system of cabinet committees. This allowed a subset of cabinet ministers to focus more closely on topics within the purview of their respective committee. According to one observer, “the over-riding intent of cabinet committees is to bring about a more intense collaboration between Ministers and to do some of the detail work on policies or initiatives or legislation that is coming to cabinet.”⁸ These cabinet committees would also be a forum where details and issues were worked out. By undertaking this work away from the cabinet table, they would make cabinet time more efficient.

As the central forum for decision-making, cabinet attracts significant attention from the media, opposition parties and policy analysts. In contrast, as stated by Kenney Ie, “Cabinet committees...are almost invisible to the public, created with minimal fanfare and operating

⁷ Op cit. Vogt. 181 Following a pattern set in the Roblin years, cabinet meetings are typically two hours long and would cover a wide range of topics, from overall discussions on policy to routine matters of appointments. It should be noted that the Schreyer and Pawley governments had extended hours for Cabinet meetings.

⁸ Op cit. Vogt.

behind closed doors.”⁹ As research for this thesis reveals, there is no consistent central record of cabinet committees or their mandates. Some cabinet committees are struck on an informal basis and may exist for many years before becoming formalized through an Order-in-Council. For example, the Pawley government established an economic committee of cabinet (ERIC) and a social policy committee (SRC) informally in 1982 but waited until 1983 to issue the relevant Orders-in-Council.¹⁰

The use of cabinet committees is not unique to Manitoba. Every provincial cabinet makes use of cabinet committees, including a Treasury Board, to deal with specific policy areas or to coordinate the activities of government.¹¹ There are differences in how each province uses these committees, but their existence is common.

One criticism of the cabinet committee system is that it undermines the decision-making authority of cabinet as a whole. In Manitoba, however, major decisions that have been discussed in committee are consistently brought to the full cabinet for discussion and decision.¹² While cabinet committees have significant authority and autonomy in the federal system and in a large province like Ontario, the cabinet, rather than cabinet committees, remains the most important forum for decision-making in Manitoba. The importance of the cabinet as the final decision-making body was emphasized in each of the interviews undertaken with former Clerks of the Executive Council Eldridge, Decter, Leitch and Vogt.

⁹ Ie, Kenney William, “Representation and Ministerial Influence on Cabinet Committees in Canada” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, (Spring 2021): 7

¹⁰ Op cit. Dunn, *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 183.

¹¹ Op cit. Dunn. “Premiers and Cabinets.” 344. Dunn provides an overview of all the Cabinet committees used in the various provinces.

¹² Op. cit. Eldridge. This is also a view expressed by Vogt and Leitch.

The study of cabinet committees is important because these committees are where much of the groundwork for decision-making in cabinet is done. They play an essential role in how government comes to grip with the broad agenda that faces government in Manitoba (and elsewhere). Many cabinet committees are formed to assist government with expenditure control, finding efficiencies, and promoting greater policy coherence on priority issues. Just as there is the old adage of “follow the money,” by following cabinet committees, we come to understand the priorities of each government and each first minister.

The concept of a committee of cabinet to manage specific mandates is not new. Treasury Board, a committee of cabinet that manages the expenditure of funds, came into existence in Manitoba in 1887.¹³ It has taken on a variety of roles since then, but Treasury Board continues to act as the comptroller of the executive. Treasury Board is unique among cabinet committees due to its weekly meeting schedule and heavy workload.

Cabinet committees allow cabinets to work more efficiently. In *The English Constitution*, Walter Bagehot makes the distinction between the “dignified” and “efficient” parts of government.¹⁴ The dignified portion is the formal structure of a constitutional monarchy, where the ministers of the Crown have formal authority to run departments and are accountable to a legislature that provides confidence and supply. The efficient part relates to how power is actually exercised within our system. As such, cabinet committees are part of the efficient part of government. According to David Zussman, “the basic goal of this system is to settle as many

¹³ Op cit. Vogt, Paul 187.

¹⁴ Bagehot, Walter, *The English Constitution*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1958) 4.

questions as possible at the committee stage to increase the efficiency of Cabinet, allowing it to concentrate on priority issues and broad political concerns.”¹⁵

When it comes to the basic choices of constructing the efficient parts of government, first ministers are seen to be the “chief architect”¹⁶ of the cabinet level machinery of government with such decisions regarded within the realm of “personal prerogative.”¹⁷ Much has been said about the constraints facing first ministers when they are creating cabinets. These include ensuring regional representation, the available talent, and, more recently, ethnic and gender representation. Much less has been said about one area where the first minister is relatively free to make decisions – the creation of cabinet committees. Whether the choice is to have a more stripped-down structure of a few committees to a more complex, even multi-layered, cabinet committee system, the first minister has a great deal of flexibility and scope in setting the structure, mandate and function of these subordinate cabinet bodies. Despite such freedom, premiers in Manitoba tend to be cautious when creating these committees. This was the case for Schreyer, who waited two years before making any changes of his own to the cabinet committee system.¹⁸

In her work “Cabinet Structure and Executive Styles in Manitoba,” Joan Grace states that the Manitoba system of cabinet committees relies on three committees: Treasury Board, an economic committee, and a social policy committee.¹⁹ It is important to note that each premier

¹⁵ Zussman, David, *Off and Running: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Government Transitions in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2013) 94

¹⁶ Ie, Kenney William, “Cabinet Committees as Strategies of Prime Ministerial Leadership in Canada,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Volume 5, Issue 4. (2019) 467.

¹⁷ Op cit. Dunn, Christopher, “Premiers and Cabinets” 318.

¹⁸ Op. cit. Eldridge.

¹⁹ Grace, Joan, “Cabinet Structure and Executive Styles in Manitoba,” in *Executive Styles in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2005) 181

in the period under study saw the cabinet committee structured differently. Some constants, such as Treasury Board, do remain in these varying structures despite the choices that various first ministers have made.

Given the role of the various committees, choosing the membership on these committees is more of a balancing act between ensuring regional and gender representation and including the relevant ministers. Ministers may need to be included due to the clear overlap between their departmental role and the mandate of the committee. It would be rare, if not impossible, to have the Treasury Board, the cabinet committee tasked with providing comptrollership to government spending, without the inclusion of the finance minister or ministers of high-spending portfolios like Health or Education. Likewise, a cabinet committee tasked with decisions regarding Manitoba Hydro would likely include the minister responsible for this Crown corporation. However, as the Manitoba experience shows, it is not necessary to have these respective ministers as chairs of these committees.²⁰ It is also important to consider the ability of members to do the work when selecting ministers for membership on these committees.

It should be noted that cabinet committees are not needed for every issue. They do provide a useful forum for issue areas that are apparent or emerging and which straddle several government departments, such as the environment or, for the Doer government, early childhood development.²¹ Cabinet committees also provide an important point of contact with

²⁰ For example, Roblin chaired the Treasury Board in the early part of his term in office. Since he also served as finance minister during this time, this is not so unusual.

²¹ Op cit. Vogt.

stakeholders in that specific policy area. The Pawley government, for example, used cabinet committees to engage with a variety of stakeholders on issues such as French language services, Indigenous issues, and multicultural groups.²²

In this thesis, I discuss the evolution of cabinet committees in Manitoba from their initial use during the Roblin era (1958 – 1967) through to that of the administration of Brian Pallister (2016 – 2021). For each premier, I will describe the cabinet committee structure that each premier employed and the impact they had on governance. Drawing on information from my research as well as original interviews, I address three research questions related to the use of cabinet committees under each of the premiers from 1958 to 2021. First, what was the structure of cabinet committees each premier employed? Second, what was the impact of these different structures on governance? Finally, how and why did the cabinet committee system change under each premier? By answering these questions, I argue that the Manitoba experience with cabinet committees reveals that the essential approach to governance taken by each first minister can be derived from their choices concerning cabinet committees. I also review the research approach I took with this thesis.

Governance is taken to mean the overall approach to the decision-making processes and strategic direction of government. This includes a spectrum between hierarchical and consensual decision-making. It also includes the spectrum between flexible and rigid processes and the levels of complexity. Governance is related to establishing the strategic direction of government and the evaluation of the progress being made toward strategic goals. It also includes the delivery of services and the implementation of policies, plans, and programs.

²² Op cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 182.

To begin, I will review some basic aspects of cabinet committees as they pertain to the Manitoba context. I will look at the statutory authority for the existence of these committees, the use of private members or MLAs on cabinet committees, the types of cabinet committees, and look specifically at Treasury Board, the most enduring and important cabinet committee. I also address the issues that I found while undertaking the research for this project. I then examine the use of cabinet Committees by each of the premiers. For each premier, I look at what cabinet committees were created, the impact they had on governance, and how they changed over each administration.

Research Approach

At the start of this process, I undertook an extensive look at the academic literature that exists for provincial cabinet committees. Given the very different approach to cabinet committees at the federal level and in Ontario and Quebec, I deliberately excluded literature that looked at cabinet committees at the federal level and in these two provinces. Due to their greater size, all three jurisdictions have a much more formal approach to cabinet committees and how they function within the cabinet decision-making process. My research focus was on Manitoba. Given how little cabinet committees are given academic study, I did not have much data to work with.

Given how little academic research I was able to source,²³ I began to look through political biographies for any clues about how cabinet committees worked during the relevant administrations. This did not prove to be a rich source of data.

I then turned to interviews as a source of information. Since an overview of cabinet committees would only be provided at the most senior levels of government, those qualifying as interview subjects would be relatively small: premiers and clerks of the Executive Council. Elite interviews were the appropriate methodological approach because they allowed me to collect specific information that was available from only a small group of informants.²⁴ The additional benefit of interviewing clerks of the Executive Council is that they tend to have long careers at the centre of government. Not only could these clerks provide information of how cabinet committees functioned during their terms as clerks, but they could also often provide information about previous administrations. Manitoba premiers also tend to have long political careers and, usually, previous experience as cabinet ministers.

I developed a list of previous clerks and premiers that would act as my sample. By necessity, this list focussed on the latter half of the study period. A total of seven former clerks and premiers were invited to participate in this project. Of these, six agreed to participate and five were interviewed. A suitable time to interview the sixth potential interviewee could not be agreed upon. All of these individuals have crowded schedules, and I am grateful that so many were interviewed for this project.

²³ As Christopher Dunn notes in his introduction to *The Institutionalized Cabinet*, systematic studies of provincial central decision-making processes are rare and that, of those which do exist, tend to focus on the premier or specific functions. Ibid. 3.

²⁴ Mikecz, Robert. 'Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 18 (2012).

Interviews took between 90 minutes and two hours. They were conducted according to an interview guide (see Appendix) that covered the various topics addressed in this thesis. While an interview guide was used, the interviews were semi-structured, which allowed the interviewees to take the discussion in unexpected directions.²⁵ Very often, interviewees expanded on the topics identified in the interview guide, and the semi-structured nature of the interviews was thus important to the research. Each interview was recorded, and transcripts were made of each interview. Each interviewee had a chance to review their quotes and the footnotes attributed to them in this thesis.

I also reviewed the Orders-in-Council from 2007 to 2021 that were publicly available through the Government of Manitoba website. I examined every Order-in-Council related to cabinet committees and used this as a basis for an analysis on composition of cabinet committees and the frequency of membership changes. It is unfortunate that this source only covers the latter part of the study period.²⁶

Statutory Authority

In the following section, the role of statutory authority related to cabinet committees is examined. Not every committee is established through legislation, but statutory authority is determined by legislation. As stated earlier, cabinet committees can be struck on an informal basis, without the issuance of an Order-in-Council or by legislation. It is simply the decision of

²⁵ Adeoye-Olatunde, Omolola, and Nicole L. Olenik. 'Research and Scholarly Methods: Semi-Structured Interviews'. *Research and Scholarly Methods* 4 (2021).

²⁶ Orders-in-Council prior to 2007 are archived and are not available through the Legislative Library.

the first minister to have a working group called into existence, such as the decision of the Roblin government to have a cabinet committee to work on forestry issues in The Pas.²⁷

While the creation of cabinet committees is in the purview of the first minister, there is statutory authority in general for the creation of such committees. Section 7 of *The Executive Government Organization Act* states:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may establish a committee of the executive council to study and advise on matters relating to the management of the executive government and a committee to study and advise on planning of government programs and projects and their relative priorities, and such other committees as he deems advisable.²⁸

There are specific acts where a cabinet committee is mentioned. For example, statutory authority for the Treasury Board comes from Section 4 of *The Financial Administration Act*, which states:

4(1) The committee of the Executive Council called Treasury Board is continued and consists of the Minister of Finance, and of other ministers and members of the Legislative Assembly appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Statutory authority for the All Aboard Committee of Cabinet (The Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Committee), which was introduced by Greg Selinger in 2011, can be found in Section 3 of *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*. This committee is unique in that it allows for up to four persons who are not cabinet members or MLAs to the committee. Making use of this unique provision, Brian Pallister appointed three private citizens to this committee.

²⁷ Ibid. 117.

²⁸ *The Executive Government Organization Act*, (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) Section 7

3(1) The Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Committee is established. It is composed [of]:

- (a) ministers responsible for policies, programs or services having an impact on poverty reduction and social inclusion, as determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council;
- (b) [repealed] SM 2022, c. 24, s. 29 ;
- (c) four other persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, in accordance with recommendations made by the Minister following his consultations with the United Way of Winnipeg and such other groups as he deems appropriate.

This is also one of the few committees where members are appointed by their portfolio rather than by name. It is the common practice in these Orders-in-Council to identify the member by name rather than by portfolio. There are a few exceptions to this practice although it is not clear why these exceptions are made.

The sections of *The Regulatory Accountability Act* dealing with the membership of the Regulatory Accountability Committee of Cabinet, Sections 5 and 6, have been repealed. There is currently no statutory authority, other than that outlined in *The Executive Government Organization Act*, for this committee.

In 2007, legislation called *The Healthy Child Act* created a cabinet committee on the Healthy Child. Although this legislation is no longer part of the consolidated statutes of Manitoba as of November 2020, membership was outlined in Section 6(1) of the legislation.

6(1) The Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet consists of ministers responsible for policies, programs or services that directly impact the lives of children, as determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The Use of Private Members on Cabinet Committees

One feature of Manitoba's cabinet committee system more recently has been the inclusion of private members, MLAs from the government side of the Legislature, as part of cabinet committees. The

inclusion of non-cabinet members as part of the cabinet committees appears to defy the exclusive nature of cabinet itself. One is either a cabinet minister, with all the privileges and obligations, or one is not. The inclusion of private members in the work of cabinet puts them in a half-world where they are no longer just private members, free to express the views of their constituents within the confines of caucus solidarity, but part of a more disciplined body that is expected to maintain solidarity and confidentiality. That said, they are not true members of cabinet even though they are included in the work done for the cabinet as part of the committee.

The inclusion of private members on cabinet committees is primarily a feature of more recent Progressive Conservative governments. Neither the NDP administrations of Pawley²⁹ or Doer³⁰ used private members in this regard although the Selinger government did.³¹ The reason cited by former premier Selinger as to the inclusion of private members as part of cabinet committees is that it was an effective tool for inclusion within the whole of caucus. He noted that backbench members often feel alienated and cut off from the decision-making abilities of their cabinet colleagues. As he stated: “In the Westminster model there is a fusion between the executive and the legislative branch and sometimes the executive forgets the other members of the legislature.”³²

No premier made more extensive use of private members on cabinet committees than Brian Pallister. He was more likely than other premiers to have multiple private members on cabinet committees. He even appointed three non-MLAs to the All Aboard Cabinet Committee on poverty reduction.³³ Although private members were not appointed to cabinet committees in the NDP

²⁹ Decter, Michael. Email correspondence with the author. February 27, 2023.

³⁰ Op cit. Vogt. Interview.

³¹ Greg Selinger Interview. April 19, 2023.

³² Ibid.

³³ *Order-in-Council 241/2021*, (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba. July 20, 2021). 1 This Order-in-Council appointed Dilly Knol of Winnipeg, Jeremy Smith of Dauphin and Ashling Sweeny of Thompson to a two-year term on the All Aboard Committee on poverty reduction. Appointing non-MLAs is not required by the Act but is made possible by it.

governments led by Pawley or Doer, the Doer government allowed any government caucus member to “sit in” on any cabinet committees.³⁴ This practice was continued by the Selinger government.³⁵

Although their participation in these committees would be restricted, they did provide a valuable resource to private members who did attend.

The inclusion of private members in cabinet committees is not an uncommon practice at the provincial level. According to one 2017 study, seven out of ten provinces included private members in at least one cabinet committee.³⁶

The inclusion of private members is problematic for a number of reasons. They are not members of cabinet and, therefore, are not subject to the cabinet conventions. However, there have not been any reports of private members breaking confidentiality or solidarity, which means that the private members so involved are conscious of their responsibilities in this area. They may also be sensitive to the career implications of breaking confidentiality.

The role of private members, regardless of which side of the House they sit on, is to provide scrutiny to the actions of government. Even taking into account the relatively friendly nature of this scrutiny from the government side, a reduction in the number of private members available to provide this scrutiny does have an impact on how government functions. Caucus meetings provide a confidential forum where MLAs can express their views on the decisions made by Cabinet. The fact that private members can serve on cabinet committees means a reduction in the capacity of private members to provide this scrutiny. This could be a deliberate strategy to reduce the ability of the backbench to

³⁴ Op cit. Vogt.

³⁵ Op cit. Selinger.

³⁶ Thomas, Paul E. J. and Lewis, J.P. “Executive Creep in Canadian Provincial Legislatures,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. Vol 52. (2019) 376.

provide scrutiny of Government decisions. This “executive creep” is a general phenomenon that affects all provinces that include private members as part of cabinet committees.³⁷

The inclusion of private members on cabinet committees could be a way for the premier to exert more influence in the workings of these subcommittees. Since they are appointed by the premier, and are reliant on the premier for future promotion, the inclusion of private members on cabinet committees could ensure the presence of loyal “spear carriers” in the deliberations of the committee.

The continued use of private members in this regard can be an affirmation of their utility. There must be benefits generally to including private members from the government caucus on cabinet committees, otherwise the practice would have been discontinued.

One possible benefit to including private members on cabinet committees can be the addition of a non-cabinet perspective to the deliberations of the committee. Since they are not privy to the information provided to cabinet ministers, private members can provide an “outsider” perspective to the work of the committee. The provision of this perspective can be valuable to cabinet ministers who may have become too close to an issue or an “insider” perspective.³⁸ The back bench is a different world than the front bench.

The involvement of private members means that they can become educated on the details within the realm of their respective committees. Since cabinet committees are the arena where much of the detailed work of governance is undertaken regarding policy and program development, a private member involved in these discussions obtains an understanding of the issues not available to other members of the Legislature. They become witnesses, if not actual participants, to how the details of an

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Op cit. Selinger interview.

issue are worked out. As the parable about laws and sausages indicates, they get to see how the “sausage” is made.

Including private members in cabinet committees was a way of involving them and having them participate in the decision-making process.³⁹ However, as former Clerk of the Executive Council Don Leitch observed, there is no guarantee that the private member would provide a perspective that was held by Caucus in general or was representative of the broader community.⁴⁰

It may also be that involving private members on cabinet committees provides training for potential ministers. A review by the author of the Orders-in-Council on committee membership from 2007 to 2022 suggests that today’s private member participants are likely to become tomorrow’s ministers: the appointment of a private member to a cabinet committee is often a precursor to their appointment as a full cabinet member.⁴¹

Not only does participation in these committees provide an education for private members, but they are also a forum in which private members can demonstrate their capacity to follow and contribute to the discussion. In this way, they become familiar with the personalities of their cabinet member colleagues. Further, their participation on these committees is the result of a choice made by the premier, who no doubt follows the success or failure of these choices.

Membership on cabinet committees can also be seen as a “consolation prize” for not being included in cabinet. Giving these private members a seat at the cabinet committee can be a poor substitute for actual cabinet membership but it does signal the premier’s interest in the talents and careers of these selected members.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Don Leitch Interview, June 5, 2023.

⁴¹ Orders-in-Council from 2007 to present are available on the Government of Manitoba website <https://oic.gov.mb.ca/oic/>.

The inclusion of private members on cabinet committees allows for a more equal distribution of work among the members. Unlike cabinet ministers, however, these private members do not have the same access to departmental resources or advice their cabinet member colleagues have. This can be a source of potential frustration for private members who sit on cabinet committees. Committees do valuable work but the evidence from Manitoba is that they are not the final or deciding forum for decision-making. That resides with cabinet. It can also be frustrating for a private member to do the work of a committee member keeping in mind that they will not be at the table where the final decision is made.

Types of Cabinet Committees

Despite the permanence of the Treasury Board as a committee of cabinet, most cabinet committees are of a more recent vintage and are more transitory in nature. Cabinet committees began with the growth in the complexity and scope of provincial public policy. As governments took on more and more tasks, starting with the Roblin government of the late 1950s, they needed to ensure the effective oversight and management of these issues. Further, as the scope of policy grows so does its interconnectedness. Policies that were once thought of in purely economic terms began to have social functions attached to them, and vice versa. For example, the location of a hospital is not just a decision based on the provision of health care, it is also a factor in creating jobs in a particular area. Both the construction of the buildings and the need for staff are factors in economic development and are considerations taken into account when decisions are made

Drawing from the Manitoba experience, I have determined that cabinet committees fall into three general categories. Treasury Board, which has a statutory basis for existence⁴², is an example of a managerial type of cabinet committee. The mandate and scope of the committee is well defined, and they are tasked with managing a specific set of issues on an ongoing basis. For example, Treasury Board is responsible for reviewing all expenditures made by government. Every spending decision must be passed by Treasury Board before action is taken and payments are made.⁴³

Another type is a coordinating committee. These committees are intended to provide policy coherence on complex government-wide issues or to provide a forum for planning. The most prominent of these kinds of committees is the central planning committee of cabinet, which has often been given the name of Priorities and Planning. This committee is tasked with determining the main activities of the government, usually around the legislative agenda of the government or ensuring the fulfillment of the government's electoral agenda. The coordinating committee is often thought of as an "inner cabinet" where key decisions are made.

Thirdly, there are special purpose committees. These committees are often created to take on a specific task within government and may be of limited duration. Often, these committees are struck to deal with an emerging issue or a point of crisis within governments. The committees formed to deal with periodic flooding crises,⁴⁴ for example, are a type of this form of cabinet committee. These committees have been used for a variety of purposes, such

⁴² In Manitoba, the Treasury Board is defined in Section 4 of *The Financial Administration Act*. Other sections of the Act define the authority of the Treasury Board (Section 5) and its ability to make regulations (Section 6). It should be noted that Section 7 of *The Executive Government Organization Act* provides statutory authority for creating Cabinet committees.

⁴³ This a requirement under Sections 5 and 6 of *The Financial Administration Act*, Government of Manitoba.

⁴⁴ Jim Eldridge, Interview, November 23, 2022.

as maintaining contact with specific interest groups in the case of the Pawley government (the committee on French Language Services is a good example) or the Selinger government's use of a cabinet committee to deal with Syrian refugees.

The overall trend in Manitoba is to rely on two committees, Treasury Board and an economic development committee or a Priorities and Planning committee, for the bulk of cabinet decision-making. Joan Grace, in her chapter in *Executive Styles in Canada* argues for three basic committees – Treasury Board, an economic committee and a social policy committee⁴⁵ - as the basic committee structure used by Manitoba cabinets. However, this finding may be to do with the relatively short time frame Grace was examining in her research.

Treasury Board

The Treasury Board committee of cabinet is the staple of Manitoba provincial cabinets and the cabinet committee system.⁴⁶ The committee was first established by *The Treasury Department Act* of 1887. Its role was further defined in the 1936 *Treasury Act*, which was to endure until the late 1960s. *The Financial Administration Act* provides current statutory authority for the existence and mandate of the Treasury Board.

Not only has this committee had an enduring presence through changes in governments and governing parties, but it is also, with a few exceptions, staffed by career public servants.⁴⁷ The Secretary to the Treasury Board is often drawn from the senior ranks of the public service rather than a political

⁴⁵ Grace, Joan, "Cabinet Structure and Executive Styles in Manitoba," in *Executive Styles in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2005.) 181

⁴⁶ Ibid. 177.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 177. The Filmon government, for example, appointed a long-time party official Julian Benson as Secretary to the Treasury Board.

appointee. Historically, the Treasury Board has been supported by a staff component located in the Ministry of Finance.

This cabinet committee is tasked with overseeing the expenditures of government to ensure that they are spent fulfilling government objectives. The Treasury Board is intimately involved in the Budget process, from preparing the departmental estimates to overseeing the expenditure of funds.⁴⁸

The major functions of the Treasury Board are:

- providing analytical support to Treasury Board in fulfilling its responsibilities for fiscal management, program and organizational reviews
- analyzing and monitoring program performance and the fiscal position of government
- planning and coordinating the review and preparation of the annual estimates and leading the development of the annual budget
- planning and coordinating the summary budgetary process
- provincial comptrollership, financial policies and practices, PSAS compliance, financial controls, and public accounts (summary financial statements)
- providing independent and objective analysis of governance, risk management and control
- ensuring that Manitoba achieves its priorities through the use of balanced scorecards
- integrating and implementing policy decisions with the longer term fiscal plans of government
- undertaking strategic initiatives and targeted program reviews
- developing and communicating policies, procedures and guidelines on administrative matters and maintaining the General Manual of Administration and the Financial Administration Manual
- providing information and tools that enhance the knowledge base of Treasury Board.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Currently, Treasury Board Secretariat maintains its own site (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/tbs/>) within the Province of Manitoba website. Comprehensive information on the mandate of this Secretariat and the cabinet committee it serves can be found on this site.

⁴⁹ Government of Manitoba website <https://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/tb/index.html> accessed on March 8, 2023. This augments the list found in Section 5 of *The Financial Administration Act*.

The Treasury Board Secretariat provides an annual report as part of the overall report of the Department of Finance. Although the workings of this committee are complex and often confidential, it is the most visible and transparent of the cabinet committees used in Manitoba.

Like the cabinet, this committee meets weekly. Other cabinet committees tend to convene every two to three weeks. The minutes of all cabinet committees are included in the cabinet package which is distributed each week the cabinet meets.

Treasury Board is the hardest working committee of cabinet. In addition to frequent meetings, the agendas of these meetings are often detailed and require patience to deal with the often-repetitive nature of the work of this committee. In addition to providing initial approval of an issue or a project, Treasury Board is often called upon to examine and approve the elements of these issues or projects as they are put in place. A major road project, for example, would require Treasury Board approval for the issuance and awarding of tenders under the project mandate in addition to approving the project as a whole.

A review of Orders-in-Council from 2007 to 2021 by the author reveals that Treasury Board had more membership changes in terms of personnel than any other committee.⁵⁰ These changes in membership reflects the heavy workload for members of this committee. As former premier Selinger noted, Treasury Board was the only committee that members lobbied to get off from.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Op cit. *Orders-in-Council*.

⁵¹ Op cit. Selinger.

Cabinet Committees Through the Years

For the first 80 years of its existence, the Manitoba cabinet functioned according to the unaided cabinet model described by Dunn.⁵² As such, there was no need for any cabinet committee, except for Treasury Board. Cabinet meetings were relatively informal affairs, with no central record-keeping or note taking. Ministers were fairly autonomous in their decision-making with the premier taking responsibility for monitoring the overall behaviour of government and providing a corporate perspective. All of this changed with the advent of the Roblin government in 1958.

In the following sections, starting with Duff Roblin, I look at the cabinet committee structure employed by each premier. I also look at the impact that these committees had on the functioning of government or governance. Finally, I review how the cabinet committee system changed during the term of administration for each premier.

⁵² Op cit. Dunn. 107.

The Roblin Years 1958-1967

The election of Duff Roblin's Progressive Conservative government in 1958 signalled a major change to the traditions of government in Manitoba. Both Roblin's impatience with the status quo and his desire for decisive action⁵³ typified the style of governance that he would embrace. The modernization of government he proposed and implemented was extensive and represented a break with the "unaided" model used by the previous Campbell government. Among his many reforms, the Clerk of the Executive Council would take responsibility for keeping minutes of cabinet meetings. The use of cabinet committees was part of the changes to

The Roblin Years 1958-1967
Two Main Cabinet Committees
- Treasury Board
- Manitoba Development Authority
1966
- Ad hoc cabinet committee on The Pas Forestry complex
- Operation Productivity cabinet committee

Figure 1

government implemented by Roblin, the "great modernizer."⁵⁴

As part of this modernization, a coordinating committee of cabinet, known as the Manitoba Development Authority, came into existence to manage the overall agenda of government. Treasury Board continued as a cabinet committee.

⁵³ Ibid. Dunn. 109.

⁵⁴ Neville, W.F.W., "Duff Roblin" in *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Ferguson, Barry and Wardhaugh, Robert, eds. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre Press. 2010) 238.

For most of his tenure, Roblin was both premier and Finance Minister. Further, he chaired both cabinet committees.⁵⁵ When he decided to appoint Gurney Evans as Minister of Finance in 1966, he assigned the chair of Treasury Board to Evans, as well.

A trio of issues (growth, investment and economic stimulation) was the main ideological driving force of the Roblin era.⁵⁶ Under Roblin, the Progressive Conservative government acted as economic interventionists “with a clear will to dominate the direction of economic development.”⁵⁷ The organization of the Manitoba Development Authority (MDA) was an expression of this will. This committee had a clear mandate for planning and analysis, and was supported by significant staff resources.⁵⁸

From 1959 to 1963, a statutory board of deputy ministers known as the Manitoba Development Board served the Manitoba Development Authority. This was changed in 1963 to a private-sector board, created by statute, known as the Manitoba Economic Consultative Board. This board was in existence until 1968.⁵⁹ After 1968, legislation was changed to replace the private sector board and have public servants return to support the activities of this cabinet committee.

This reflects the three phases in the operation of the MDA. The first period, from 1959 to 1963, saw economic interventions by government in all parts of the province, not just in the North as originally envisioned. The second period, running from 1963 to 1966, was less

⁵⁵ Op cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 112.

⁵⁶ Ibid. Dunn. 111.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Dunn. 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Dunn. 113.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Dunn. 113.

interventionist, and this cabinet committee served as a pipeline for bringing the concerns and policy ideas of business directly to cabinet. The period from 1966 to 1968 saw the MDA experiment with new interventionist powers around program implementation.⁶⁰

Treasury Board had its own staff, the Budget and Research staff, within the Treasury Department. It would continue to examine the expenditures of government. There was a conscious decision to separate the Treasury Board from the activities of the MDA.⁶¹

Starting in 1966, there was an informal or ad hoc cabinet committee on The Pas Forestry complex, which was being used to develop the forestry industry in the province.⁶² The Roblin government embarked on an ambitious overview of the operations of government with a view to finding efficiencies and improving the outputs of government. This project, called Operation Productivity, was supervised and managed by its own cabinet committee. Generally, the “dual” model of Treasury Board and the Manitoba Development Authority continued throughout the years Roblin spent as premier.

The Weir Interregnum 1967-1969

Duff Roblin was succeeded in office by Minnedosa MLA and cabinet minister Walter Weir, who won the leadership convention called to replace Roblin. The selection of a rural minister for premier was a sign that the ruling Progressive Conservatives were returning to a

⁶⁰ Ibid. Dunn. 116.

⁶¹ Ibid. Dunn. 115.

⁶² Ibid. Dunn. 117.

“small government, low taxes” orientation.⁶³ The choice for premier could hardly be more different. Where Roblin was aggressive and dynamic, Weir was more passive and cautious. He was unprepared for the workload of being premier and was not eager, aside from his small government orientation, to put his own stamp on government.

The Weir years saw significant change in the structure of cabinet committees. These changes came as a result of the Operation Productivity process, the review of government operations instituted by the Roblin government to find efficiencies and improve outputs, which included the use of two cabinet committees as part of its recommendations.⁶⁴ Clerk Derek Bedson was the main driving force in the reorganization of the Executive Council and the structure of cabinet committees.⁶⁵ The Treasury Board was renamed as the Management Committee. The Manitoba Development Authority was dissolved, and a new Planning and Priorities Committee of cabinet would take its place. Finance Minister Gurney Evans would chair the Management Committee while Labour Minister C.H. Whitney would chair the Planning and Priorities Committee.⁶⁶

In contrast with Roblin, every minister had a role in one of the two committees. In a further contrast, Weir sat on neither cabinet committee.⁶⁷ Just as the structure of cabinet committees expressed Roblin’s business-like approach, the structure of Weir’s cabinet

⁶³ Adams, Christopher, *Politics in Manitoba: Parties, Leaders, and Voters*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008) 40.

⁶⁴ Spivak, Sidney and Riley, Conrad, *Report of the Task Force on Government Organization and the Economy*, (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba, April 1978) 56.

⁶⁵ MacNeil, Scott, “Walter Weir” in *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Ferguson, Barry and Wardhaugh, Robert eds. (Regina: Canadian Prairies Research Centre, 2010) 269.

⁶⁶ Op cit. Dunn. 121.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 113.

committees reflected his “hands off” approach to government. Weir was content to take a less directive approach to government than Roblin. He became entangled in federal issues without setting a clear agenda for the province. For example, his first cabinet was largely the same cabinet appointed by Roblin but with a few additions of his own.⁶⁸ His passive approach to governing was not in step with the dynamism of the late 1960s and his decision to call a snap election in 1969 did not result in victory for his party.

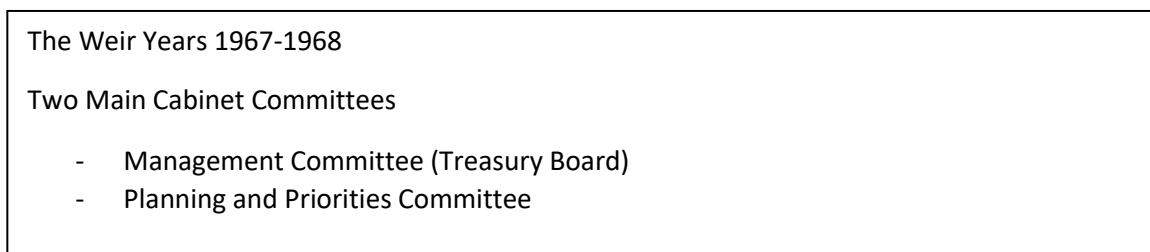


Figure 2

The Schreyer Years 1969-1977

Although the election of a minority New Democratic Party government in 1969 represented a major realignment in Manitoba politics, the incoming Schreyer Government kept the dual cabinet Committee system that had been recommended by the Operation Productivity report and put in place by Weir.⁶⁹ He retained many of the Conservative-era staff in senior positions in central agencies and deputy ministers positions complementing them with his own appointees later on.⁷⁰ According to former Clerk of the Executive Council Jim Eldridge,

⁶⁸ Op cit. MacNeil 268.

⁶⁹ Op Cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 136.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 134.

Ed Schreyer is very much a traditionalist. He would be very moderate in many respects, and he felt “let’s not upset the system too much” and “let’s see what happens with the existing people.”⁷¹

Schreyer was mindful of the fact that his government had little experience with the exercise of power. The election of an NDP minority government in 1969 was generally unexpected. Prior to the 1969 election, the NDP was, in fact, the third party in the Manitoba Legislature. Since it leapt over the usual stint of serving as Official Opposition prior to forming government, the incoming government had little preparation for their government roles. None of the incoming cabinet had ever served in a cabinet role, nor were they the Official Opposition critics.

A party in Official Opposition is often seen as a government-in-waiting. As such, the party statements and policy positions are given greater scrutiny by the media, policy analysts and the other political parties. As the third party in the legislature, the New Democrats did not need to meet this test of their policy competence. As a consequence of this, the NDP platform was built around a few central ideas, such as eliminating health care premiums and tax reform, but did not consist of the comprehensive mandate typical for governments-in-waiting.

In addition to Schreyer’s own orientation towards moderation, he preferred to keep many of the existing structures in place, including retaining the same Clerk of the Executive Council, Derek Bedson, who had been recruited by Roblin, over the course of his term.⁷² He retained the two cabinet committees used by the previous Progressive Conservative government until 1973. Five ministers served on the Priorities and Planning Committee while three ministers would serve on the Management Committee (Treasury Board).

⁷¹ Eldridge Interview.

⁷² Originally appointed by Roblin, Bedson would also serve as Clerk to Sterling Lyon, who succeeded Schreyer as premier.

The Schreyer Years 1968-1977

Dualism continues 1968 – 1973

- Priorities and Planning
- Management Committee

1973 and after

- Planning Committee (which was the whole Cabinet)
- Treasury Board
- Intergovernmental Relations Committee (dealt with Aboriginal issues)
- Committees of the Planning Secretariat supporting the Planning Committee included:
 - o Resources and Economic Development,
 - o Health, Education and Social Policy
 - o Manpower, Employment and Immigration
 - o Planning and Land use
 - o Regional Development
 - o Indian and Métis Affairs
 - o Equal Opportunities
 - o Legislation
 - o Urban Affairs
 - o Winter Works

Figure 3

In a notable departure from typical practice, Schreyer wanted his cabinet committees to be in competition with each other for the attention of cabinet. This was in keeping with his desire for lively debate within his government.⁷³ According to former Clerk of the Executive Council Jim Eldridge:

I used to think it was a bit interesting in that there would be policy debates in front of staff – and large numbers of staff. And it seemed to expose differences among the cabinet ministers, which had negative consequences, I am sure, at times. But anyways, it was a big process and very important in the policy development of the Schreyer government.⁷⁴

⁷³ Interview with Michael Decter, January 13, 2023.

⁷⁴ Eldridge Interview.

This was Schreyer's way of testing ideas in the deliberative forum of a cabinet committee that would give him time to assess the political acceptability of the options presented to him over the course of the discussion.⁷⁵ As former Clerk of the Executive Council Michael Decter noted:

He would tend to be this austere, stoic premier but he would like to have contending points of view so he could make up his mind which ones resonated with him politically and policy terms...I think his comfort was often in hearing conflicting opinions and deciding what was feasible politically.⁷⁶

Competition between the two main committees of cabinet would generate creative tension but was also a way of providing checks and balances to the overall system.⁷⁷ The overlapping nature of some of the committee work would generate alternate viewpoints that would be left for Schreyer to decide on their merits (or to demonstrate a lack of consensus on an issue).

In addition to line department staff, the Schreyer cabinet was supported by staff in the Executive Council Office (ECO). The Planning Secretariat in the ECO supported the planning function of cabinet.

Two pieces of legislation were passed by the Schreyer government early in their first term that were germane to the organization of cabinet committees. *The Financial Administration Act*, originally introduced by the previous Conservative Government, replaced

⁷⁵ Op cit. Decter.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Op cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 152.

the *Treasury Department Act* and renamed the Treasury as the Ministry of Finance and created the Minister of Finance.⁷⁸ This legislation reinforced the centrality of the Management Committee of Cabinet, formerly the Treasury Board, as the locus of government financial decision-making.⁷⁹ *The Executive Government Organization Act*, passed in 1970, replaced the *Executive Council Act* and the *Development Authority Act*. This act contained general provisions related to the organization of government, including legislative recognition of cabinet committees.⁸⁰ As Dunn notes, “It was not explained why the government felt it was necessary for cabinet committees to have a legislative base.”⁸¹

In keeping with NDP policy, and that of its predecessor, the CCF, there was an emphasis on central planning as part of government decision-making. Initially, this planning would be undertaken by the Priorities and Planning Committee of Cabinet (PPCC). Later, the entire cabinet would be involved in the planning process. In addition to a strong belief in central planning, there was the incorporation of social science rationalism in the decision-making of cabinet.⁸² The latter implied that an objective analysis of the pros and cons of a particular policy using analytical tools developed by the social sciences could be a better guide to decision-making than a more partisan or interest-based approach.

Cabinet committees were a way to compensate for the perceived weaknesses among ministers. As Schreyer stated in an interview with Christopher Dunn:

⁷⁸ Replacing the Provincial Treasurer.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 137.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 137.

⁸¹ Ibid. 137.

⁸² Ibid. 161.

And quite candidly, in Cabinet when you have one half competent ministers and one half uncertain, tentative, unsure of foot, it relieves some anxiety from the Premier to have submissions dealt with by a policy cluster of ministers. It is important to ensure that the mix is such that you do not have all the uncertain ministers in one group and all the experienced and aggressive ministers in another one.⁸³

An Order-in-Council on September 17, 1970, saw the re-creation of the Priorities and Planning Committee (PPCC). The mandate of the committee was expanded to include all government programs instead of those focused on economic development. A memorandum circulated at the time explained the difference between these two cabinet committees:

Another difference is that the PPCC concept calls for a somewhat broader approach to planning and includes a review and priority establishment of all major programs of government. The Manitoba Development Corporation did not review all programs and tended to concentrate on economic development programs with lesser emphasis on social development programs.⁸⁴

This committee made good use of its expanded mandate to investigate a variety of policy areas. As stated by Dunn, the PPCC was “the intellectual dynamo of the early Schreyer government and was its cutting edge of innovation.”⁸⁵ Membership in the PPCC was restricted to five members with the premier in the Chair.

As noted earlier, the Management Committee became the chief forum for financial decision-making in the Schreyer government. For most of the time, this committee was not chaired by the finance minister except for a brief period from 1970 to 1972. The lack of prominence of the finance minister in the fiscal decision-making apparatus in favour of the Management Committee may have had to do with a perception among New Democrats that

⁸³ Ibid. 142.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 142.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 143.

the finance minister was primarily concerned with the raising of revenue rather than how these funds were spent.⁸⁶

Despite warnings from public servants, the Management Committee would become bogged down by the minutia of government decision-making. Meetings of the Management Committee would last for six or seven hours and deal with 40 or more items. As a result of these long, involved agendas, ministerial attendance began to suffer. Only a minority of ministerial members would attend the entire meetings.⁸⁷

The cabinet committee on Urban Affairs, later renamed the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) committee, was in the forefront of policy changes with regard to the amalgamation of the various municipal entities that would comprise a unified Winnipeg starting in 1972.

The Churchill Forestry Industries (CFI) committee was an ad hoc committee of cabinet struck to deal with the increasingly problematic dealings concerning the forestry complex in The Pas. This cabinet committee took effective control over the operation and supplanted the corporate Board of Directors in managing this project.⁸⁸ As a result of the failure to secure adequate private sector support, the complex was placed in receivership in January 1971. It was transformed into a provincial Crown corporation in 1973.

The Health, Education and Social Policy committee was formally established by Order-in-Council 1146/71 on October 27, 1971. It was composed of three members with Minister of

⁸⁶ Ibid. 144.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 160.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 145.

Colleges and University Affairs Saul Miller in the Chair. Originally intended as a cost containment measure, this committee undertook policy reviews in the areas of Health policy and Post-secondary Education.

In 1973, Schreyer made a major change in the way that cabinet committees would work. He dissolved the Priorities and Planning Committee and assigned responsibility for planning to a committee of the whole cabinet. Three sub-committees of cabinet were created around a cluster of policy areas: Resources and Economic Development (RED), Health, Education and Social Policy (HESP), and Manpower Employment and Immigration (MEISC).⁸⁹ In addition, two informal sub-committees, the Provincial Employment and Winter Works committee and the Municipal and Urban Affairs committee, were formed to deal with issues in those areas. These sub-committees would take responsibility for managing policy development in their respective areas.⁹⁰ All five sub-committees were served by support staff located in the cabinet Planning Secretariat.

The Provincial Land Use Committee continued and was responsible for land use policies, planning and coordination. This group was supported by an Interdepartmental Planning Board, established under *The Planning Act*, and a small staff component located in the Department of Municipal Affairs.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Op cit. Spivak and Riley. 57.

⁹⁰ Interview with Paul Vogt, January 9, 2023.

⁹¹ Op cit. Spivak and Riley. 57.

On the management side of the cabinet committee structure, there was also a cabinet committee on Public Service Negotiations. As the name implies, this committee was responsible for negotiating the collective agreements covering the Manitoba public service.⁹²

Unlike cabinets before or since, the Schreyer government would often engage lengthy debate on the issues of the day. Given his dislike for discussing “politics” during cabinet meetings, these discussions were policy focussed and could go on for hours or, in some cases, weeks. According to Michael Decter, who was a staff member at the time, the cabinet committee system was ineffective during Schreyer’s first term in office but became more effective during the second term.⁹³ In the first term, too much time was spent by committees engaging in policy debates that were not central to the issues at hand. This improved dramatically as the government moved into its second term. After 1973, cabinet would meet in morning and afternoon sessions on Wednesdays.⁹⁴ The morning session would focus on the routine matters affecting cabinet government while the afternoon sessions would focus on planning and policy.

The move to the use of the full cabinet for planning decisions came as a result of pressure from other cabinet ministers who were excluded from the original PPCC. They felt that they should be involved in the planning process and Schreyer wanted to avoid creating the impression of having a two-tier cabinet. As Dunn notes:

The Cabinet Planning Committee was thus a broad planning mechanism which shared the planning function with other committees. It considered economic and social

⁹² Ibid. 58.

⁹³ Op cit. Decter.

⁹⁴ Op cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 146.

development plans, monitored achievements relative to objectives, set the public policy research agenda, and dealt with legislative proposals and expenditure estimates.⁹⁵

The work of the 'cluster committees' continued. The RED committee was involved with a variety of negotiations related the federal-provincial agreements, most notably the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) General Development Agreement and the Manitoba-Canada ARDA agreement.⁹⁶ HUD undertook work on joint transportation projects with the City of Winnipeg as well as work on the 1977 Development Plan Review mandated by the new *City of Winnipeg Act*. Coordination of the bewildering array of job creation projects were managed by the Committee on Provincial Employment and Winter Works committee of cabinet.

Although the name implied engagement with other levels of government, the Intergovernmental Relations committee of cabinet was concerned with planning for Indigenous peoples in concert with Indigenous groups.⁹⁷ This implied a government-to-government relationship with First Nations.

The Planning Secretariat would undertake specific policy reviews as well as embark on macro-economic plans such as *Guidelines for the Seventies* and *The Northern Plan*. These government-wide overviews were meant to provide an overarching policy focus to the work of individual departments and set objectives.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 147.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 147.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 147.

Overall, the Schreyer government would elaborate on the dual cabinet committee system first established by Roblin and refined under Weir. A faith in central planning as well as social science rationalism were major guides in how decisions were made.

The Lyon Years 1977-1981

The election of the Progressive Conservatives under Sterling Lyon in 1977 represented a significant change in the way the province was governed. Not only did Lyon wish to restrain the expansion of government policy that was seen under previous administrations by “putting the brakes on”⁹⁸, but he also sought a return to the “unaided” model of government prior to that instituted by Roblin almost 20 years previously. As such, only two cabinet committees, the Provincial Land Use Committee and Treasury Board, were initially employed by the administration. The overall structure of cabinet committees under the Schreyer government was dismantled and the Planning Secretariat was “dis-established.”⁹⁹

One of the more notable activities undertaken by the Lyon government was the Task Force on Government Organization and the Economy. This Task Force was co-chaired by Sidney Spivak, the former leader of the Official Opposition before losing his leadership to Lyon, and Conrad Riley, a well-known Winnipeg business figure in the area of finance. The Task Force had

⁹⁸ Eldridge interview.

⁹⁹ Op cit. Spivak and Riley. 61.

a

- The Lyon Years 1977-1981
- Treasury Board
 - Provincial Land Use Committee
 - Federal Provincial Arrangements (1978 subcommittee reporting to Treasury Board).
 - Economic Development (April 1979)
 - Community Services (November 1979)

Figure 4

broad mandate, which included the use of cabinet committees, to deal with the optimal structure of governance and economic reform.

The Task Force presented their report in April 1978. The report recommended that the structure of cabinet committees would be dramatically changed. Instead of the ‘stripped-down’ model employed by Lyon, there would be an expanded Treasury Committee of cabinet, chaired by the premier and including six members. Each of the six members would take responsibility for a major policy area. These areas were: Crown Corporations, Government Administration, Finance and Intergovernmental Financial Relations, Personnel Administration, Legislation and Policy Development, and Northern Affairs. Each of these policy areas would be supported by permanent public servants.¹⁰⁰

Despite the profile given to the Task Force and its report, the recommendations regarding cabinet committees were not accepted by the Lyon government. There was a view that the recommendations of the Task Force were “fundamentally flawed.”¹⁰¹ The private sector orientation of the report’s authors overlooked the past traditions of responsible government, including the traditional role of Treasury Boards. The proposed Treasury

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 61.

¹⁰¹ Op cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 166.

Committee, for example, would be composed of six super-ministers who would have broad policy mandates and responsibilities that would overlap the authority of ministers in line departments.¹⁰²

The advent of the Lyon government was a return to the more traditional role for the Treasury Board. In addition to reclaiming the name, the Board would consist of four to five members with the premier, and later the finance minister, as Chair.¹⁰³ The mandate for the revitalized Treasury Board would be less involved than that of the former Management Committee and more traditional in scope. Staff support for Treasury Board would be located in the Department of Finance rather than within the ECO.¹⁰⁴

In 1978, a sub-committee on federal-provincial fiscal relations was created for the Treasury Board. The purpose of this committee was to act as a clearinghouse for the negotiation of federal-provincial agreements with a focus on how these would affect budget creation and to monitor the expenditure of funds made under these agreements.¹⁰⁵ It would also identify any policy gaps within the existing federal-provincial framework and determine what areas new agreements might cover. The sub-committee was also tasked with streamlining existing policy and financial relationships with the federal government.¹⁰⁶

Overall, the role of cabinet committees was limited, and more initiative and responsibility were assigned to the individual ministers and their departments throughout the

¹⁰² Op cit. Spivak and Riley. 61.

¹⁰³ Op cit. Dunn. 171.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 172.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 171.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 174.

Lyon mandate. The passage of time and the need for greater internal coordination saw the introduction of other cabinet committees, such as the Committee on Economic Development in April 1979 and Community Services in November 1979.

The Economic Development Committee, which was strongly endorsed by Finance Minister D.W. Craik, would have a narrower focus than its predecessors but would have authority to promote “megaprojects” that were key to the Lyon government’s economic development plans.¹⁰⁷ According to Craik:

The job of the Economic Development committee was to promote the megaprojects – four or five specific projects: Aluminium, Western Power Grid, Potash, Forestry...The Committee was there to provide first-round examination of the details of the project before it got to Cabinet.¹⁰⁸

The committee would also be responsible for developing an overall economic development strategy as well as to coordinate the activities of the departments involved in economic development. The committee would also be responsible for engaging with all sectors of the provincial economy on ways to stimulate positive growth.¹⁰⁹ Craik would be the Chair of this new committee.

The Lyon government was also concerned with the growth in spending on the social services side of the government ledger. The Community Services committee of cabinet was created to coordinate the delivery of services in health, education, social services, consumer

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 172.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 172.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 172.

services, leisure, fitness, and cultural services. It would also examine alternatives to provincial service delivery in these areas, including the involvement of the voluntary sector.¹¹⁰

Overall, the Lyon years saw the re-emergence of the Finance Department as the focus for fiscal decision-making. Treasury Board returned to a more traditional role and staff support would be drawn from the Finance department rather than ECO. Lyon grudgingly expanded the number of cabinet committees from the original two to include committees on Economic Development and Social Services as well as a sub-committee of Treasury Board that would be responsible for federal-provincial relationships.

The Pawley Years 1981-1988

The election of a New Democratic government under Howard Pawley occurred in 1981. This signalled a return to the institutionalized cabinet model that had been rejected by Lyon. The cabinet committee system was modified significantly, with three main cabinet committees and a plethora of supporting committees created. In addition to Treasury Board, the other main committees were the Economic Resources and Investments Committee (ERIC) and the Social Resources Committee (SRC).

Aside from these three main committees, the other cabinet committees were divided between seven specific purpose committees and three interest group committees. These latter committees were given the responsibility for establishing and maintaining contact with specific

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 172.

groups within Manitoba society, such as multicultural groups or groups representing the French language community.

This structure remained in place until 1987 when the cabinet committee structure was reformed to include a Planning and Priorities Committee. In addition, committees to deal with the renewal of Manitoba rivers and a committee on public investments and Crown corporations were created.

Unlike Schreyer, Pawley had the benefit of having experienced ministers in his cabinet. The premier could have more confidence in the experience of former ministers, such as Health Minister Larry Desjardins and Industry Minister Len Evans, to manage their departments and work as part of a cabinet team. Schreyer, with a novice government, did not have this advantage.

Pawley was not seized by administrative issues but was more focussed on the policy agenda. This allowed a group of four senior ministers (Minister of Finance Vic Schroeder, Minister of Energy and Mines Wilson Parasiuk, Minister of Northern Affairs Jay Cowan and Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Eugene Kostyra¹¹¹) to fill the vacuum on the administrative side.¹¹² All four ministers were close to Pawley and had an outsized presence in the activities of cabinet as a whole.

Unlike the Schreyer government, which was elected during a time of relative prosperity, the Pawley government had to deal with a major recession. The overall theme of the

¹¹¹ Kostyra was also Minister of Urban Affairs and Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation at the same time.

¹¹² Op cit. Decter.

government was to reconcile the values of government, such as greater participation in the economy, with the limited resources available.¹¹³

Averaging six members over the term of the Pawley government, Treasury Board emerged as the main committee of cabinet. As in the Lyon years, it was generally chaired by the Minister of Finance and followed the same mandate as set out in the previous administration.¹¹⁴

As in the Lyon years, there was a reliance on an economic committee of cabinet (ERIC) and a social policy committee (SRC). Both were established informally in 1982 and were later formalized through the passage of Orders-in-Council in 1983.¹¹⁵ Continuing the pattern set by the previous administration, cost containment was a task assigned to the SRC.¹¹⁶

Given the recessionary economic climate, one of the main responsibilities of the ERIC was to manage the counter-cyclical Jobs Fund program. The full title of the committee in the Order-in-Council, The Economic Resources and Investments Committee/Jobs Fund Committee, reflected the importance of this program to the government.¹¹⁷

Among the interest group committees was the French Language Services Committee, which grew from the abortive attempt in 1983-84 to remedy court-determined deficiencies in official language services. To heighten the government's profile among other ethnic groups, the Ethnocultural Committee was established informally in 1982 and established formally by an

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Op cit. Dunn. *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. 182. Jay Cowan, who was not Minister of Finance, served as Chair from 1983 to 1986.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 183.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 183.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 183.

Order-in-Council in 1987. A Native Affairs Committee was informally established in 1982 and later formally established by Order-in-Council in 1985. This committee, comprising of six members and originally chaired by the premier, was to be a forum for discussions between Indigenous groups and the federal government with the province.¹¹⁸

There were also the special purpose committees. The committee on Public Service Compensation which, as the name implies, dealt with pay and benefits for the civil service, was occasionally folded into the Treasury Board. There was a committee on Strategy and one on Communications which focused on more partisan concerns.¹¹⁹ The Provincial Land Use Committee continued its operations and there was a committee on Urban Affairs. Briefly in 1987, there was a committee on Crown Corporations. There was also a Joint Council committee on legislative review.

Given the number of cabinet committees, which had grown from eight committees to fourteen, there was a need to better coordinate their activities. In 1987, a Planning and Priorities Committee of cabinet was established.¹²⁰ Prior to the establishment of this committee, planning had been a departmental responsibility. Planning activities occurred in the cabinet committees and during the Estimates process.¹²¹ Planning would now become the responsibility of a dedicated committee for this purpose.

Shortly after the 1986 election, the Pawley government commissioned former Clerk of the Executive Council Michael Decter to undertake a comprehensive study of expenditure

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 183. The committee was later chaired by Minister Elijah Harper.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 183.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 184.

¹²¹ Ibid. 185.

management and taxation. Delivered later in 1986, this report was titled “Expenditure Management: A Review and Recommendations for Reform” and would be popularly referred to as the Decter Report. The work of this report would be supervised by the Special Ministerial Committee on Tax Reform and Expenditure Management. This high-powered committee consisted of the premier, the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Minister of Finance, the chairs of ERIC and SRC, the Clerk of the Executive Council and others.¹²² One of the tasks assigned to this process was linking expenditures more closely with the policies they aimed to support. The report noted that policy and expenditure decisions were being undertaken without sufficient consideration of each other.

Of the four major recommendations stemming from this report, two have to do with the role of cabinet committees. The first recommendation was to strengthen Treasury Board and affirm its role regarding revenue and expenditure decisions. The second major recommendation was to narrow the role of policy cabinet committees to an advisory role rather than a decision-making focus.¹²³ The committees would provide sectoral input into the preparation of Estimates and defer decisions on expenditures to the Treasury Board.

¹²² *Ibid.* 189.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 190.

The Pawley Years 1981-1988

- Treasury Board
- Economic Resources and Investments Committee (ERIC)
- Social Resources Committee (SRD)

Specific Purpose Committees

- Public Sector Compensation
- Strategy
- Provincial Land Use Committee
- Joint Council
- Communications
- Urban Affairs
- Crown Corporation Reform (briefly in 1987)

Interest Group Committees

- French Language Services
- Ethnocultural Committee
- Native Affairs Committee

1987

- Treasury Board
- Planning and Priorities Committee
- River Renewal
- Public Investments Corporation/Crown Reform

Figure 5

1986 was a decisive year for the Pawley government. A narrow victory in the general election, combined with the findings of the Decter Report and a changeover in the senior ranks of the public service made a revision to cabinet government necessary. Cabinet became more hierarchical and institutionalized. The planning activities of ERIC and SRC were folded into the new Planning and Priorities Committee (PPCC) and Treasury Board was strengthened. Two new cabinet committees, one on Crown corporations reform and one on River Renewal, were formed.

The Committee on Crown Reform would be chaired by Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System Gary Doer¹²⁴ and include the ministers responsible for the major Crown corporations and the Minister of Finance. The Committee on River Renewal would be chaired by Minister of Natural Resources Leonard Harapiak and the Ministers of Environment, Culture, Heritage, and Recreation, and Urban and Municipal Affairs would be members of this committee.¹²⁵

According to the premier:

The Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet has been established as a forum for setting directions and monitoring the implementation of priority policies. The Treasury Board has been strengthened to ensure improved management of the province's fiscal resources in the achievement of government priorities. To this end, the board will be charged with the responsibility for multi-year fiscal planning, the identification of longer-term expenditure reduction possibilities, program and organizational review, and systems for accountability and the delegation of authority.¹²⁶

The cabinet committee on Crown Reform would evolve into the Board of Directors for the new Public Investments Corporation of Manitoba (PIC), a holding company that would retain the assets of 16 Manitoba Crown corporations. The legislation creating the PIC would fulfil the desire of the premier and his inner cabinet for stronger control over the Crown corporations that had caused a great deal of political trouble in the first term of the Pawley government. The new corporation would be the link between cabinet and the Crowns and would act like the Treasury Board.¹²⁷ The special purpose committees would continue to

¹²⁴ He was also Minister for Urban Affairs.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 193. The information was taken from a February 6, 1987 press release.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 193.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 198.

function, but it became clear that “the PPCC, TB and PIC were to become the major workhorses of cabinet.”¹²⁸

Given the short time period in which they had to operate, it is uncertain what the long-term impacts would have been regarding these changes to the cabinet system. The second term of the Pawley government was cut short by the fall of the government on a budget vote in the Spring of 1988. They would not win the subsequent election.

The Filmon Years 1988-1999

The election of a minority Progressive Conservative government in 1988 saw a major change in the way that cabinet committees would be employed. The elaborate cabinet committee system used by the Pawley government would be abandoned. The immediate task before the new government was the creation of a new Budget. The previous government had been defeated on a Budget vote and, as a consequence, there was no Budget for the fiscal year 1988-1989 approved by the Legislature. Given the minority position of the government, care would be needed in the preparation of this new Budget to avoid being defeated in a future vote.

Given the importance of this task, Treasury Board would be the primary forum for reviewing past budgetary decisions and formulating the new Budget. Many meetings were required to go through all of the tasks necessary for the creation of the Budget. Given the

¹²⁸ Ibid. 199.

priority given to this work, the premier would chair Treasury Board.¹²⁹ Overall, the premier would chair Treasury Board for just over two years, or two Budget cycles.¹³⁰ Duff Roblin and Sterling Lyon were the only other premiers since 1958 to chair Treasury Board for any period of time. Decisions regarding all the other cabinet committees were postponed while the Budget process took predominance.

The Treasury Board dominated the deliberations of the Filmon Transition Team on cabinet committees in the period prior to taking power. The need to set up the committee quickly and for it to be staffed appropriately meant that it needed to be structured concurrently with decisions about who would be in cabinet. The need to provide for the rapid success of the committee in creating a new budget was the primary focus of the new government.¹³¹

While seven other cabinet committees would eventually be created, they arose more out of an evolving need for these committees rather than any forethought before taking power.¹³² These committees were: Economic Development Board, Human Services, Legislative and Regulatory Review, Multicultural Affairs, Provincial Land Use, Sustainable Development, and Urban Affairs.¹³³

Created in 1990, the Economic Development Board would be second only to Treasury Board in terms of importance to the new government. This committee evolved out of the expressed desire of the premier to attract new investment to the province. In Filmon's own

¹²⁹ Filmon, Gary, *Yes We Did: Leading in Turbulent Times*, (Winnipeg: Heartland Press. 2022.) 85.

¹³⁰ Don Leitch Interview, June 5, 2023.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Op cit. Grace. 176.

words, the Economic Development Board would “be as powerful as Treasury Board.”¹³⁴ This committee may be more loosely structured than Treasury Board but needed the capacity and rigor to evaluate investment proposals and have the flexibility to make the decisions necessary to attract investment. This might mean, for instance, the creation of a new highway to facilitate the development of land or securing the primary inputs to make a processing plant feasible. This committee needed the ability to secure the advice of subject-matter experts resident within the various government departments.¹³⁵

The need for a “robust, rigorous” economic development committee¹³⁶ reflected the competitive environment around attracting new investment, domestic or external, to the province. Several other jurisdictions may have been competing for this new investment. In the words of former clerk Don Leitch, “you know sometimes you are competing with another jurisdiction or two and if they are going to throw their “A Team” at their ability to attract the investment, you want to have an “A Team” to step up and play for you as well.”¹³⁷

Membership on this committee was drawn from the holders of economic portfolios within the cabinet. The Clerk was involved in a supporting role to this committee, especially with regard to summoning the subject-matter experts within departments necessary for assessing and evaluating investment proposals.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Op cit. Filmon. 106.

¹³⁵ Op cit. Leitch.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

The Filmon Years 1988-1999

- Treasury Board
- Economic Development Board
- Human Services
- Legislative and Regulatory Review
- Multicultural Affairs
- Provincial Land Use
- Sustainable Development
- Urban Affairs

Figure 6

One innovation employed by the Filmon government was the creation of the Committee on Legislative and Regulatory review. This committee, comprising government caucus members as well as cabinet ministers, was given the task of reviewing legislation before it was submitted to the Legislature. It also played a similar role regarding the supporting regulations.

Originally, the review of legislation was a task handled by cabinet as a whole. However, as the government evolved, there was a need by 1993 to hive off decision-making regarding legislation to a small cabinet committee. One constraint facing the legislative agenda of any government is the capacity of legislative counsel to draft legislation. There was a temptation to deal with easier, shorter bills by drafters and to postpone the heavy lifting on major bills until later. This approach did not match the priority given to more important legislation which may be more complicated or challenging. The task of this cabinet committee, supported by a staff person in the Executive Council Office, was to manage the limited drafting resources in accordance with the government's priorities (rather than the priorities of the drafters). This small committee always included the membership of the Attorney General and the Minister of

Justice. One or two MLAs from the government side also took part in the committee's deliberations.

Although the cabinet committee structure of the previous government was given some consideration, the creation of cabinet committees under the Filmon government was more a result of pragmatic evolution rather than proactive thinking.¹³⁹ The Human Services committee, for example, arose from the need to provide a forum for the various departments that had social spending as part of their mandates – Family Services, Health and so on – to deliberate on priorities in their areas.

Multicultural Affairs arose from the need to deal with a fundamental and changing characteristic of the province. This committee served as a point of contact between the government and the various multicultural communities that existed in the province. This was one committee where the involvement of MLAs of specific backgrounds was considered important.

One ongoing committee from the Pawley years concerned Provincial land use. The Provincial Land Use Committee was established by legislation and was mandated to decide on zoning, Crown land sales, and other land use issues. Sustainable Development was a response to the work done by the United Nations in the Brundtland Report in 1987. This field was also important to the federal Mulroney government.¹⁴⁰ The work of this committee led to the establishment of the International Institute for Sustainable Development as an international non-governmental organization in Winnipeg where it remains to this day. Urban Affairs was

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

needed because of the dominance of Winnipeg as a population centre in the province. Given the predominance of rural members in caucus and cabinet, a special forum to debate issues related to urban affairs was needed. Other urban centres, such as Brandon, were included in the mandate of this committee.

When deciding on the membership of these committees, the personal capabilities of the minister was given equal importance by Filmon as their portfolios.¹⁴¹ Having effective committees was an important consideration by the premier when determining the final membership of a committee. Backbench members would occasionally be assigned to cabinet committees on an *ex officio* basis. They could contribute to the discussion and gain an appreciation of the issues involved but they were not “voting” members of their respective committees.

Allowing cabinet committees to evolve naturally from the work of the main cabinet, which was the approach that Filmon took, led to the endurance of the overall system.¹⁴² While occasional fine tuning might be required due to a cabinet shuffle, the practice of the Filmon government was that the mandate of the committee rather than the membership was most likely to change.

Overall, ministers approached their work on cabinet committees with enthusiasm, but, according to former Clerk of the Executive Council Don Leitch, they could not be counted on to make the best use of their time.¹⁴³ They would often get sidetracked or get involved in

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

discussions that were not focused on the main issues at hand. However, cabinet committees were a place where ministers could “chew the bones” of an issue and present these worked-out issues to cabinet for further discussion. Cabinet committees made cabinet time more productive.¹⁴⁴

Cabinet remained the main decision-making body. While cabinet committees were important to the general functioning of the cabinet, they were not given the final say on an issue or topic. Cabinet felt free to disagree with the findings of a committee and set their own course on the issues of the day.¹⁴⁵ This view was consistently expressed in the other interviews conducted for this thesis.

Work on cabinet committees, especially Treasury Board, could become repetitive and get bogged down in the minutia of a technically complex issue. Ministers preferred to deal with “big picture” issues rather than the careful scrutiny of a detailed submission. That said, dealing with the minutia of an issue, especially legislation or regulations, was what was required of the committee.¹⁴⁶

The Doer Years 1999-2009

At the eve of the millennium in 1999, Manitobans elected Gary Doer and his New Democrats. Doer started his administration with three major cabinet committees: Treasury Board, the Community Economic Development committee, and the Healthy Child

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Committee.¹⁴⁷ A committee on Homeland Security was founded in response to the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America. A committee on Aboriginal Affairs was established in 2003. A committee of caucus and cabinet to review legislation was retained from the Filmon era.

One striking difference between the cabinet committee structure embraced by Doer was the rejection of a planning and priorities committee to coordinate the activities of government. Doer saw such a committee as undermining the role of the whole cabinet in the decision-making process. He wanted to avoid the creation of an “in group” within the cabinet, which he felt had been the situation with the Pawley administration.¹⁴⁸ Further, it was thought that the elimination of an “inner cabinet” would foster greater collegiality among cabinet members.¹⁴⁹

The role of cabinet committees and, in particular, the Healthy Child committee was a topic of discussion in Doer’s preparation to take power. He wanted a more streamlined cabinet committee process that would be results-oriented.¹⁵⁰ Policy, not ideology, would be the focus.¹⁵¹ According to former Clerk of the Executive Council Paul Vogt:

I think there was a very conscious effort to streamline the cabinet committee process somewhat because I think there had been a feeling that ministers had almost been captured or a huge portion of their time and energy had been captured by committee work. I think the vision that Doer had was that ministers would be spending much more time with stakeholders and citizens than spending time in late night meetings in cabinet committees. And I think that he achieved that.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Op cit. Vogt.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Vogt.

¹⁴⁹ Op cit. Grace. 182.

¹⁵⁰ Op cit. Vogt.

¹⁵¹ Op cit. Grace. 175.

¹⁵² Op cit. Vogt.

With regard to the committee on the Healthy Child, Doer was persuaded by work undertaken by Fraser Mustard and others on the importance of the first six years of a child's development as being critical to the life opportunities that would await them.¹⁵³ Doer and his team were concerned that, despite the importance of this time period in a person's life, very little public policy was in place to support the optimal development of the child. The failure to

The Doer Years 1999-2009

- Treasury Board
- Community Economic Development
- Healthy Child Committee (founded in 2002, legislation 2007)

- Aboriginal Affairs (after 2003)
- After 9/11, Homeland Security
- Cabinet/Caucus committee – Legislative Review

Figure 7

support development during this time would lead to greater difficulties as an adolescent and as an adult. The committee and, later, legislation were put in place to give greater focus to this issue and to organize government to better respond to policy needs in this area.¹⁵⁴ This would require engagement by multiple departments.

In contrast to earlier administrations, Doer wanted cabinet committees to be practical in their orientation rather than forums for high-level policy discussions or debate. There was an alignment between the creation of cabinet committees and the policy priorities of the government.¹⁵⁵ According to former Clerk Paul Vogt, Doer used a hockey analogy to express his

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

approach. The desire was “to put the puck in the net”¹⁵⁶, putting practical matters ahead of meeting any ideological goals. He also wanted cabinet ministers to spend more time dealing with stakeholders and less time sitting in committees.¹⁵⁷

In the selection of memberships on the various cabinet committees, Doer was conscious of representational concerns. He did not want committees to be male-dominated or lack representation from northern or rural members.¹⁵⁸ Membership selection of cabinet committees reflected this view.

The Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) replaced the Economic Development Board that was a cabinet committee under the previous Filmon government. The goal of this committee was to be “the focal point for government’s effort to stimulate positive economic activities and strengthen communities.”¹⁵⁹ Given its responsibility for planning and coordinating the economic development activities of government, the committee became significant in the overall decision-making processes of the Doer cabinet. The fact that the committee was chaired by the premier gave this committee prominence among the rest.

The work of the CEDC was supported by a Deputy Ministers Committee, a group of deputies mirroring the ministerial portfolios in the committee. This group met monthly.¹⁶⁰ The Clerk of the Executive Council was officially the chair of this committee although it was often chaired by the Secretary to the CEDC, Eugene Kostyra, a former Pawley cabinet minister.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Op cit. Grace. 177. The quote is taken from the press release announcing the creation of the Cabinet committee.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 178.

The importance of including an Indigenous perspective in government decision-making led to the creation of an Aboriginal Affairs committee of cabinet. It was thought that relying solely on the two Indigenous members of cabinet, Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Eric Robertson and Minister of Conservation Oscar Lathlin, to provide this perspective placed too great a burden on these two members. A cabinet committee was seen to broaden the workload on this front.¹⁶¹ It should also be noted that Indigenous concerns are found throughout the province, including Winnipeg, which had an increasing Indigenous population troubled by high unemployment, the generational impact of residential schools, and other difficult social issues.

The Selinger Years 2009-2016

The transition from Gary Doer to Greg Selinger saw little change in the overall structure and operations of cabinet committees with one exception – the reintroduction of a Planning and Priorities Committee.¹⁶² This committee would take a “big picture” approach to the sweep

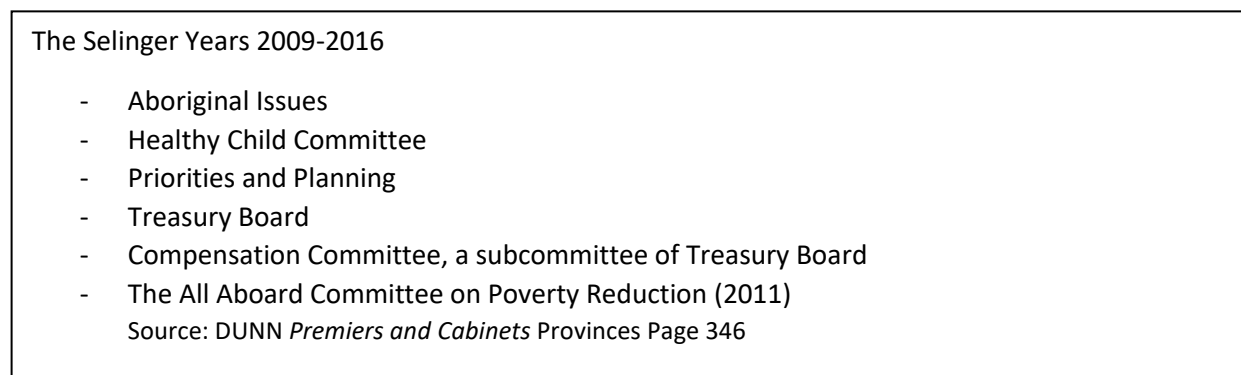


Figure 8

¹⁶¹ Op cit. Vogt. Interview.

¹⁶² Greg Selinger Interview, April 19, 2023.

of issues under the government's control. This change clarified which cabinet committee would be responsible for the overall direction of government.

The Planning and Priorities committee would become a forum where issues would be "thrashed out"¹⁶³ in a format that included senior officials and political staff. Chaired by the premier, membership would include 10 ministerial members and a rotating seat for government MLAs. This process often clarified the position the government would take as the details of a particular initiative were worked out. As Selinger stated:

What it allowed for was an airing of issues that, if people had questions or concerns or even objections, they could raise them. And you could canvass them and have a discussion about it. And that included officials because you would have senior officials at the end of the table including political staff who would comment on things. It allowed for a big discussion about what was going on. Everybody could have a big back and forth with each other even if they disagreed. It allowed for a first go at it and, if nothing else, what I found was it clarified things.¹⁶⁴

Selinger took an inclusive view to the meetings of this cabinet committee; anyone in the government caucus could sit in on a meeting as it discussed particular issues. While they could attend, the role of these members was as observers rather than full participants.

Selinger wanted a less adversarial relationship between Treasury Board and the line departments. To achieve a more collaborative approach, he moved senior officials who took the more adversarial approach and made his desire for this new approach well-known.¹⁶⁵ In addition to appointing a long-term public servant to head the Treasury Board Secretariat, he also established a committee of senior deputies to reinforce this new approach.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

In setting up cabinet committees, Selinger relied on his own experience as a cabinet minister and Chair of Treasury Board. He did not work with a transition team as he took the reins of government. Selinger also appointed caucus members to cabinet committees. He did so to bridge the gulf that sometimes develops between the front and back benches.¹⁶⁶ In addition to not having the same resources as cabinet ministers, they would not have a vote on these committees, but they did contribute to the discussion.

Selinger would also co-chair the cabinet committee on Aboriginal Affairs, along with Eric Robertson, who was also named Deputy Premier. This committee consisted of nine ministerial members and three MLAs. This move signalled the importance he wanted to give issues under the committee's purview.

In terms of committee membership, the portfolio of a minister counted more than their personality.¹⁶⁷ Membership was also selected to ensure representation from rural and northern ministers in these committees, as well as the Interlake region of the province.

In terms of workload, Treasury Board was the most active cabinet committee with meetings occurring weekly or multiple times during the week. Chaired by the minister of finance, this committee consisted of eight ministerial members with the legislative assistant to the finance minister 'sitting in' but not as a formal member. The work was detail-oriented and could be very dry compared to the other, more policy-focussed committees. Further, those working in Treasury Board needed to accomplish their work according to unrelenting deadlines, such as those required for preparing the provincial budget. The net effect is that there is a

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

higher level of attrition among Treasury Board members than in the other cabinet committees.¹⁶⁸ More membership changes were required by Treasury Board than any other cabinet committee during Selinger's term.¹⁶⁹ The Treasury Board, which had between six to eight members, was chaired by the Minister of Finance.

Treasury Board had a subcommittee on public service compensation consisting of five ministerial members. This was a task formerly handled by the Civil Service Commission but assigned to this sub-committee by Selinger due to its impact on the Provincial Budget.¹⁷⁰ This sub-committee would be responsible for handling collective bargaining negotiations.

The Healthy Child Committee, with 11 ministerial members, continued under the Selinger administration. This policy area would remain a priority for the Selinger government as it was under Doer. In 2011, *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* was passed. This legislation included a section where a cabinet committee would be appointed. This legislation provided that up to four non-cabinet members could be appointed from the general public to serve on this committee.

Due to changes in cabinet membership, the cabinet committees required "fine tuning" over the course of the Selinger administration. The most significant change occurred after the 2014 resignation of cabinet ministers over the increase in the Provincial Sales Tax and

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Orders-in-Council 2007 to present. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) <https://oic.gov.mb.ca/oic/> The onerous workload was responsible for the high levels of member attrition.

¹⁷⁰ Op cit. Selinger.

dissatisfaction with Selinger's leadership.¹⁷¹ The Selinger government also employed a special cabinet committee to deal with the influx of Syrian refugees from that country's civil war in 2015-2016. Senior officials as well as cabinet ministers were part of this committee.

The Pallister Years 2016-2021

The new Progressive Conservative government under Brian Pallister created a change in the way that cabinet committees would operate. Three cabinet committees were initially established – Treasury Board, chaired by the Minister of Finance, the Planning and Priorities Committee, chaired by the premier, and the Regulatory Accountability Committee.

In 2017, three other cabinet committees would be created. These included the Fiscal Responsibility Committee, the Healthy Child Committee and the All Aboard Committee on poverty reduction. 2018 saw the addition of a committee on Economic Growth and a committee on Gender-based Violence. In contrast to previous administrations, Pallister would make extensive use of appointing MLAs to these committees.

¹⁷¹ "Manitoba revolt: 5 ministers resign from Premier Greg Selinger's cabinet", CBC News. November 3, 2014. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-revolt-5-ministers-resign-from-premier-greg-selinger-s-cabinet-1.2821632>

The Pallister Years 2016-2021	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priorities and Planning - Regulatory Accountability - Treasury Board
2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Aboard Committee (Poverty Reduction Committee) - Fiscal Responsibility Committee - Healthy Child Committee
2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Growth - Gender-Based Violence

Figure 9

Treasury Board, chaired by the Minister of Finance, would originally consist of five members with additions up to eight members. Two MLAs were appointed to Treasury Board. In 2019, Treasury Board would expand to include 10 members, five of which were MLAs.¹⁷² By 2021, the size of Treasury Board would be reduced to seven members with two or three MLAs as members. Early in his administration, Pallister made a point of attending Treasury Board meetings.¹⁷³

The Priorities and Planning committee would consist of eight members throughout the Pallister era. It would be chaired by the premier. There would be one or two MLAs appointed to this committee.

¹⁷² *Order in Council 322/2019*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) October 23, 2019.

¹⁷³ *Op cit.* Vogt.

The Fiscal Responsibility Committee would report to Treasury Board and consist of eight members. It is notable that a majority of members on this committee would be MLAs with only one or two ministers appointed to this committee. This committee was tasked with examining priority matters with regard to strategic transformation, including providing oversight to the key transformation projects identified in the Fiscal Performance Review. This committee would also be assigned for other strategic initiatives identified by Treasury Board or cabinet as a whole.¹⁷⁴

The Healthy Child Committee would consist of six members. Unlike other Orders-in-Council, members of this committee were nominated by portfolio rather than by name.¹⁷⁵ The legislation concerning the healthy child would be repealed in November 2020, which also resulted in the abandonment of the cabinet committee.

The All Aboard Committee on poverty reduction is another committee where members are nominated by portfolio rather than by name.¹⁷⁶ Originally consisting of five members, this committee would be co-chaired by the Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Families. By 2021, membership would grow to eight ministers and include the appointment of three non-politicians to the committee.¹⁷⁷ The non-politicians would be appointed with the advice of the United Way but no other criteria for the selection of these members was established.

¹⁷⁴ *Order in Council 127/2017*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) May 10, 2017.

¹⁷⁵ *Order in Council 234/2017*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) August 17, 2017.

¹⁷⁶ *Order in Council 235/2017*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) August 17, 2017.

¹⁷⁷ *Order in Council 241/2021*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) July 20, 2021. These individuals were Dilly Knol of Winnipeg, Jeremy Smith of Dauphin and Ashling Sweeny of Thompson.

The Regulatory Accountability Committee was established under the *Regulatory Accountability Act* and consisted of seven members, including three government MLAs.¹⁷⁸ Membership would grow to nine members and up to four MLAs. The Economic Growth Committee was established “to study and advise on a co-ordinated whole of government approach to growing the provincial economy.”¹⁷⁹ This committee would have eight to ten members, with a minimum of two MLAs and a maximum of five MLAs over the course of its existence. The Gender-based Violence Committee was created to study and advise the government on matters related to the integration of government services with a view to ending gender-based violence in Manitoba. It would also study and advise the government on issues related to the collaboration across government departments “to better meet the needs of Manitobans in critical situations relating to domestic or family violence and sexual violence.”¹⁸⁰ The committee, chaired by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, would consist of seven to eight members and include one or two MLAs.

Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis was undertaken to answer a fairly straightforward question – do the choices around cabinet committees reveal essential clues to understanding the approach each first minister takes toward their approach to governance? To answer this question, I examined Manitoba premiers and cabinet committees in three ways. First, I described the cabinet committee system employed by each premier. Second, I explored the impact that these

¹⁷⁸ *Order in Council 231/2017*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) August 17, 2017.

¹⁷⁹ *Order in Council 345/2018*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) November 28, 2018.

¹⁸⁰ *Order in Council 346/2018*. (Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.) November 28, 2018.

different combinations and configurations of committees had on governance. Finally, I examined how and why the cabinet committee system changed over the term of office of each premier. The Manitoba experience with cabinet committees reveals that the essential approach to governance taken by each first minister can be derived from their choices concerning cabinet committees.

Starting with Roblin, who saw cabinet committees as the essential workhorse supporting his aggressive agenda for reform, we see cabinet committees in the forefront of the way each first minister approached this task. Roblin himself saw government as a vehicle for effecting change. The cabinet committee model that he adopted allowed for the implementation of his aggressive and farsighted reform agenda.

In contrast, Weir, who briefly followed Roblin, absented himself from participation in any cabinet committee even though he implemented the changes recommended by Operation Productivity. His decision not to sit on any cabinet committee was a clear signal of his “hands off” approach to governance.

The Schreyer government, with its unique approach to governance compared to other governments, saw cabinet committees as fora for debate on policy items and set up to compete with each other for the attention of cabinet. This approach allowed Schreyer to choose which items were more politically palatable from the smorgasbord of debate within these committees and cabinet in general. While he adopted a policy of moderation in his choices, he wanted the widest variety of options to choose from.

The Lyon government, with its elimination of a complex committee structure and an emphasis on Treasury Board, was a throwback to the unaided government approach in existence prior to the Roblin years. However, the increased complexity of government required the addition of an economic management committee and the creation of a committee on social policy issues. Despite his desire for a more stripped-down cabinet committee structure, he had to accept that good governance required the addition of these committees.

The Pawley government relied on a more diverse and complex cabinet committee system. Pawley himself was not seized with administrative issues and deferred to his senior ministers on many of these items. The coordinating committee of cabinet, the Planning and Priorities committee, was the workhorse of government although cabinet retained final authority over decision-making.

Out of necessity, Treasury Board became the major cabinet committee for the minority Progressive Conservative government of Gary Filmon. As his grip on power became more secure, other committees would evolve out of pragmatic necessity, including a strong cabinet committee on economic development. These choices reflected his own pragmatic, evolutionary approach to governance.

A more proactive approach to cabinet committees was undertaken by the Doer government. The institution of a cabinet committee on the Healthy Child revealed a priority for his government as well as the rejection of any coordinating committee on planning. The latter was a reaction to the dominance of such an “inner cabinet” during the Pawley years. His

cabinet committee choices were in keeping with his goal-oriented approach to governing Manitoba.

The advent of Greg Selinger as premier saw a return of the coordinating committee as a central committee of cabinet. For Selinger, this made the planning process more transparent and accountable. With this exception, he retained the cabinet committee structure instituted under Doer.

Brian Pallister took his own approach to cabinet committees as premier. Treasury Board would return as the primary cabinet committee and more MLAs were appointed to cabinet committees. He also appointed non-MLAs to the All Abord cabinet committee on poverty reduction, as was permitted by the legislation.

Overall, the approach taken by each premier towards cabinet committees reveals vital clues to their approach to governance as a whole. The choices around cabinet committees and their function are key to understanding their overall attitude towards the task of governing Manitoba. Howard Pawley, for example, favoured a complex system of 14 cabinet committees, reflecting his desire for greater consultation and engagement in the policy development process. In contrast, Sterling Lyon favoured a spare approach to cabinet committees, reflecting his desire for smaller, more limited government. Although cabinet committees are almost invisible to the general public in the coverage of political issues, they are an important forum for decision-making, second only to cabinet itself.

As Jim Eldridge stated, you should not underestimate the important symbolism created by cabinet committees. By establishing a particular cabinet committee, you are stating that this

issue area is an important priority for government.¹⁸¹ These committees also become a point of contact between the executive and civil society groups working in the policy area.

Membership in cabinet committees is generally driven by the portfolio the minister holds rather than the personality or status of the person involved, although other factors, such as regional representation and gender inclusion may be involved. On Treasury Board, for example, it is a given that the Minister of Finance is a member. Other large-spending portfolios, such as Health, also tend to be represented.¹⁸² Despite the importance of portfolios in determining cabinet committee membership, it is interesting to note that, in the Orders in Council appointing cabinet committee members, these members are more likely to be mentioned by individual name rather than their portfolio. It is only in a minority of cases that the portfolio (i.e. Minister of Finance) is used in place of the member's name.¹⁸³ In the case of the Doer government, ensuring a balance of genders and representation from northern and rural constituencies were important factors in determining cabinet committee membership.¹⁸⁴

In general, Progressive Conservative governments placed greater emphasis on Treasury Board as the key cabinet committee. The focus on cost-containment and prudent government spending by these governments may be the reason why Treasury Board was the predominant committee for Progressive Conservative administrations. Three Progressive Conservative premiers would chair Treasury Board for part of their administrations. In contrast, New

¹⁸¹ Eldridge interview.

¹⁸² Op cit. Vogt.

¹⁸³ This comes from a review of the relevant Orders-in-Council from 2007 to present available on the Government of Manitoba website <https://oic.gov.mb.ca/oic/>. *Order in Council 327/2019* appointing members to the All Aboard committee on poverty reduction is an exception where members are appointed by portfolio rather than by name.

¹⁸⁴ Op cit. Vogt.

Democratic governments placed greater stress on the planning functions of government, which meant the coordinating committees were predominant during their administrations (unless this responsibility was placed on cabinet as a whole). The premier would chair this committee.

There has been much discussion of the dominance of the first minister when it comes to cabinet government. While the premier gets to “call the consensus” even in the face of majority cabinet disagreement, the evidence from the interviewees suggests that this ability is used sparingly. In Manitoba at least, cabinet retains its authority as the main decision-making body of government. Cabinet committees do valuable work in determining the details or finer points of legislation, but the ultimate decision is left to cabinet to make.¹⁸⁵

There is evidence to support the endurance of a dual model of Treasury Board plus an economic development committee as the consistent pillars of the cabinet committee system. While Grace argues for a three-committee model as the basic system of cabinet committee structure, including a social policy committee along with Treasury Board and an economic development committee, the social policy committee holds lesser predominance than the economic development committee even under New Democratic administrations, where social policy might be seen as having greater importance.

This thesis provides an overview of how each first minister selected the cabinet committees they used to support the overall work of cabinet. Although it is unanimous among interviewees that cabinet as a whole remains the primary decision-making body¹⁸⁶, cabinet committees do valuable work in sorting out the details of government initiatives and making

¹⁸⁵ This was a consistent point made by Eldridge, Decter, Leitch and Vogt.

¹⁸⁶ This point was emphasized by each of the interviewees.

the trade-offs that are common in the development of public policy. Treasury Board, with its responsibilities for fiscal management issues, remains a key cabinet committee, regardless of the partisan stripe of the party in power.

Given their importance to the government's decision-making process, it is surprising that so little attention goes into reporting on cabinet committees and their role. Hopefully, this thesis sheds some light on this important facet of public administration in Manitoba.

Bibliography

- Adams, Christopher, *Politics in Manitoba: Parties, Leaders, and Voters*. University of Manitoba Press. Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2008
- Adeoye-Olatunde, Omolola, and Olenik, Nicole L. 'Research and Scholarly Methods: Semi-Structured Interviews'. *Research and Scholarly Methods* 4 (2021): 1358-1367.
- Bagehot, Walter, *The English Constitution*, Oxford University Press. 1958.
- Dunn, Christopher. 'Premiers and Cabinets'. In *Provinces: Canadian Provincial Politics*, Third Edition., 315–62. University of Toronto Press, 2015.
- . *The Institutionalized Cabinet*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.
- . 'The Manitoba Cabinet in the Liberal-Progressive Era 1922-1958'. *Prairie Forum* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 85–102.
- Ferguson, Barry and Wardhaugh, Robert eds, *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Canadian Plains Research Center Press, Regina Saskatchewan. 2010.
- Filmon, Gary. *Yes We Did: Leading in Turbulent Times*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Heartland, 2022.
- Government of Manitoba. Orders-in-Council, 2007 to the present, Executive Council Office.
<https://oic.gov.mb.ca/oic/>
- "The Executive Organization Act", Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba. November 28, 2023. <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/e170.php?lang=en>
- "The Financial Administration Act", Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba. November 28, 2023.
<https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/f055.php?lang=en>
- "The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act", Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba. November 28, 2023. <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/p094-7.php?lang=en>
- "The Regulatory Accountability Act", Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba. November 28, 2023.
<https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/r065.php?lang=en>
- Grace, Joan. 'Cabinet Structure and Executive Style in Manitoba'. In *Executive Styles in Canada*, 171–83. University of Toronto Press, 2005.
- le, Kenney William. 'Cabinet Committees as Strategies of Prime Ministerial Leadership in Canada, 2003 - 2019'. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 57, no. 4 (2019): 466–86.
<https://doi.org/Kenney William>.

- . 'Representation and Ministerial Influence on Cabinet Committees in Canada'. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique*, 2021, 1–22.
- Lewis, J.P. 'Elite Attitudes on the Centralization of Power in Canadian Political Executives: A Survey of Former Canadian Provincial and Federal Cabinet Ministers'. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 46, no. 4 (December 2013): 799–819.
- MacNeil, Scott, "Walter Weir" in *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Ferguson, Barry and Wardhaugh, Robert eds. Regina, Saskatchewan: Canadian Prairies Research Centre. 2010.
- Mikecz, Robert. 'Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 18 (2012): 482-493.
- Neville, W.F.W., "Duff Roblin" in *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Ferguson, Barry and Wardhaugh, Robert eds. Regina, Saskatchewan: Canadian Prairies Research Centre. 2010.
- Penner, Roland. *A Glowing Dream: A Memoir*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 2007.
- Rowat, Donald ed. *Provincial Government and Politics Comparative Essays*. Department of Political Science Carleton University, 1973.
- Spivak, Sidney, and Conrad S. Riley. 'Report on the Task Force on Government Organization (Volume 1)'. Government of Manitoba, 31 March 1978.
- Thomas, Paul E.J., and J.P. Lewis. 'Executive Creep in Canadian Provincial Legislatures'. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 52 (2019): 363–83.
- Vogt, Paul. 'The Manitoba Cabinet'. In *Manitoba Politics And Government*, eds. Paul G. Thomas and Curtis Brown. 181–204. University of Manitoba Press, 2010.
- Wilson, Ian. 'Derek Bedson: Clerk of the Executive Council'. MA Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2001.
- Zussman, David. *Off and Running: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Government Transitions in Canada*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press. 2013.

Interviews

Michael Decter, Clerk 1981-1986 – January 13, 2023

Jim Eldridge, Clerk 1999-2004 – November 23, 2022

Don Leitch, Clerk 1988-1999 – June 5, 2023

Greg Selinger, Premier 2009-2016 – April 19, 2023

Paul Vogt, Clerk 2005-2013 – January 9, 2023

APPENDIX

INTERVIEWER GUIDE First Minister Choices on Cabinet Committees August 7, 2022

INTERVIEWEE: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

INTRO 5 minutes 0:00

My name is Chris Baker, and I am a Master of Arts student in the Thesis stream of the program offered by the University of Manitoba. My thesis is investigating the choices that are made by First Ministers in Manitoba at the start of an administration regarding Cabinet structure and Cabinet committees. I have over 25 years experience working in public policy, and I currently hold a Duff Roblin fellowship for political studies, which supports this research project.

While your participation will be noted in the methodology section of my report, the information that you will share with me will be considered confidential. If I do mention your name specifically in the document, you will have the chance to review these mentions to ensure that you are quoted accurately and represented fairly in the text. This session will be recorded to ensure accuracy. If you wish, you can receive a copy of the recording for your records.

Additionally, this guide has been reviewed by the University of Manitoba to ensure that it fits within the ethical guideline for research that involves human subjects. Any questions before we begin?

WARM-UP 10 minutes 0:05

- A. Thinking about the time before you took office, did you spend any time thinking about how Cabinet is structured or committees you might use? Anything else?
- B. What was your view of the officials in the Executive Council Office? Any thing else?

Transition Team 10 minutes 0:15

- C. Did you work with a Transition Team?
 - a. Who led the Transition Team?
 - b. Did the Team have members outside of government? Other composition?
- D. Who came forward on the question of Cabinet Committee structure? Yourself? Someone else?
- E. Tell me about how you came about to talk about Cabinet Committees in these sessions?

Cabinet Committee Structure 15 minutes 0:25

- F. Generally, there are several Cabinet Committees appointed along with Cabinet. Aside from Treasury Board, which has been in existence since the 1890's, there is a lot of flexibility in the names and mandates of these committees. Briefly, what was the structure you initially used? Anything else?
 - a. Did that structure need to change? Why? How did that change occur?
- G. Did you use a central co-ordinating committee? (Priorities & Planning, etc.)?
 - a. Who chaired that committee?
 - b. Did it do its job?
- H. Did you have to appoint a Cabinet Committee deal with an emerging issue or situation? Can you provide an example?

Cabinet Committee Membership 20 minutes 0:40

- I. When thinking about the structure, did you think about specific ministerial portfolios that would need representation on these committees? Who, in particular?
- J. Thinking about assigning ministers to these committees, how much input was received from Ministers prior to their assignment? Did Ministers have input on which committee they would serve?
- K. When assigning cabinet committee membership, was the emphasis on building strong committees or on balancing the overall dynamics of Cabinet?
- L. Manitoba is unique in that it allows private members from the government side to serve on committees, such as Treasury Board. Is this a good idea? How so?
- M. What is the main advantage of having a private member serve on a Cabinet committee? The main disadvantage?

Cabinet Committee in Action 10 minutes 1:05

- N. Did your system of cabinet committees work? Did it require fine tuning? How so?
- O. If you were to do it over again, what would you have changed? Anything else?

WRAP-UP 5 minutes 1:15

- P. If you could create a motto or slogan for the system of cabinet committees you are familiar with, what would it be?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION