



FEDERAL CABINET

An Analysis of Prime Minister Harper's Cabinet

MGTC42

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INTRODUCTION

Federal Cabinet: a central body in the executive branch of the Canadian Government. Its members are formally appointed by the Governor General on the direct advice of the Prime Minister¹.

- Reside at the pinnacle of executive political power in Canada
- Responsible for leading the nation and deciding the direction of national public policy

INTRODUCTION

- Consists of political officials called “Cabinet Ministers” or “Ministers of the Crown”
- These Ministers are given the responsibility of overseeing specific areas of public policy (such as finance, national defence, foreign affairs, industry, natural resources, agriculture, etc.)



INTRODUCTION

Primary Functions of Federal Cabinet²:

- ✓ Securing agreement among Ministers on government priorities
- ✓ Securing agreement on parliamentary actions by the government
- ✓ Providing a forum for ministerial debate on issues of general interest
- ✓ Providing adequate information to Ministers relative to decisions for which they will be held collectively responsible and which may impact on their individual responsibilities
- ✓ Providing adequate information to the Prime Minister to carry out his/her responsibilities and his/her leadership role.

INTRODUCTION

The role and the function of Federal Cabinet is absolutely integral to the administration and smooth functioning of our governmental system.

“The government’s success or failure hangs on the success of the cabinet selection”

– The Way It Works, Chapter 4, Pg. 57 (Goldenberg)

CABINET SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Ensure Diversity in Government

- Age
- Ethnic Background
- Religion
- Occupational Background
- Gender
- Regional Representation

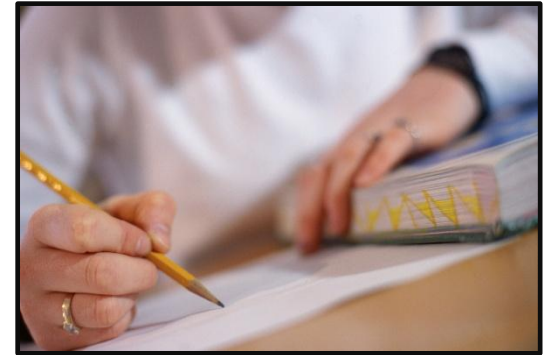


“If the decisions made by cabinet are to serve all people, then every cabinet must have access to the experiences and feelings of a broad spectrum of the public” –*Political Management In Canada*, Chapter 2, Pg. 17 (Blakeney & Borins)

CABINET SELECTION CRITERIA

2. Ensure Adequate Abilities

- Handling Written Material (“rapid digestion”)
- Speaking Clearly
- Handling Questions in the House of Commons Successfully (Political Skills)
- Exercise Independent Judgement
- Professionalism
- Ability to Represent an Otherwise Under-Represented Group
- Handling the Media
- Administration Skills



CABINET SELECTION CRITERIA

3. Ensure Party Unity

- Loyalty to Political Party is Key
- Goal of Prime Minister is to Maintain Party Solidarity



4. Placement of “Roman Guards”

- Cabinet Ministers who have proven their loyalty to the Prime Minister
- Unconditional, long-time, and faithful political supporters

CABINET SELECTION CRITERIA

5. Bringing “New Blood” Into Government

- Promotion of Rising Stars in Politics to Cabinet Positions
- Recruitment of Successful Individuals not Previously in Politics

6. Experience Matters

- Previous Experience in Cabinet or Public Service is a Highly Valuable Asset
 - Ministers who Have Proved their Mettle and Skills in Cabinet
- “A successful cabinet cannot be comprised only of rookies”
– *The Way It Works*, Chapter 4, Pg. 61 (Goldenberg)

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

1. Ensuring Diversity in Government: AGE

Average Age of Cabinet Ministers is 52
Average Age of Canadian Population is 39

70% of Cabinet is Older than 48
34% of Canadian Population is Older than 48

Harper's Success Rating:

MODERATE

Age Distribution of Federal Cabinet Ministers		
As at January 19, 2010		
Age Range	Number of Ministers	% of Total
30-35	1	2.7%
36-41	7	18.9%
42-47	3	8.1%
47-52	8	21.6%
53-58	8	21.6%
58+	10	27.0%

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

2. Ensuring Diversity in Government: GENDER

Canadian Population Gender Breakdown is:

49.5% – Male

50.5% – Female

Harper's Success Rating:

POOR

Gender Distribution of Federal Cabinet Ministers		
As at January 19, 2010		
Gender	Number of Ministers	% of Total
Male	26	70.3%
Female	11	29.7%
Total	37	100.0%

“There are a few public policy issues where, for a variety of reasons, gender does matter” – *The Way It Works*, Chapter 4, Pg. 62 (Goldenberg)

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

3. Ensuring Diversity in Government: REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

Regional Distribution of Federal Cabinet Ministers			
As at January 19, 2010			
Provincial Representation	Number of Ministers	% of Total Cabinet	Provincial Contribution to National Population
Alberta	6	16.2%	10.9%
British Columbia	5	13.5%	13.3%
Manitoba	2	5.4%	3.7%
New Brunswick	1	2.7%	2.3%
Newfoundland & Labrador	0	0.0%	1.5%
Northwest Territories	0	0.0%	0.1%
Nova Scotia	1	2.7%	2.8%
Nunavut	1	2.7%	0.1%
Ontario	13	35.1%	39.1%
Prince Edward Island	1	2.7%	0.4%
Quebec	5	13.5%	23.4%
Saskatchewan	2	5.4%	3.1%
Yukon	0	0.0%	0.1%
Total	37	100.0%	100.0%

Harper's Success

Rating:

GOOD

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

1. Ensuring Diversity in Government: VISIBLE MINORITIES

There are only 2 Ministers who represent visible minorities:

- **Leona Aglukkaq – Minister of Health**
 - She was the first-ever Inuk to be sworn into the Federal Cabinet (2008)
- **Beverley J. Oda – Minister of International Cooperation**
 - She was the first-ever Canadian of Japanese origin to be elected to the House of Commons (2004)
- Percentage of Visible Minorities in Canadian Population: 17%
- Percentage of Visible Minorities in Federal Cabinet: 5%

Harper's Success Rating:

POOR

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

4. Ensuring Diversity in Government: DISABILITIES

The Honourable Steven John Fletcher – Minister of State (Democratic Reform)

- The first permanently disabled Canadian to be elected to the House of Commons.
- An automobile collision with a moose, left him a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down.
- Over 4.4-million Canadians suffer from some form of disability, this represents a staggering 14.3% of the population.



Harper's Success Rating:

MODERATE

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

5. Bringing “New Blood” into Government

When Harper's Cabinet was revised in 2008, there were 3 prominent new additions:

- Leona Aglukkaq – Minister of Health
- Gail Shea – Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
- Lisa Raitt – Minister of Natural Resources

All three are considered “rookies” and their appointment represents a highly visible attempt by Harper to bring “New Blood” to his Cabinet

Harper's Success Rating:

GOOD

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

6. Experience Matters

The Oldest Ministers in Cabinet are:

1. Gordon O'Connor (1939) – Minister of State and Chief Government Whip
 - A Canadian Military Officer for over 30 years
2. Marjory LeBreton (1940) – Leader of Government in Senate and Minister of State (Seniors)
 - Served in Senate since 1993
 - Has been a highly active member of the Conservative Party for over 48 years

Harper's Success Rating:

MODERATE

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

7. Ensuring Diversity in Government: OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND

“there is a public perception that the best cabinet would consist of lawyers, accountants, and business-people –the people who have experience making the types of decisions that governments face. Not so, a cabinet needs farmers, working people, people from many other groups – people who see the world from a perspective outside the business mainstream” – *Political Management In Canada*, Chapter 2, Pg. 16 (Blakeney & Borins)

- **Jay Hill – Leader of the Government in the House of Commons** (prior to entering the public domain worked in the forestry, and oil industry and also operated a family farm with his brother)
- **Jean-Pierre Blackburn – Minister of National Revenue** (teacher)
- **Gordon O'Connor – Minister of State** (military officer for over 30 years)

Harper's Success Rating:

MODERATE

FEDERAL CABINET

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

8. Ensure Party Unity

Robert Douglas Nicholson – Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

- Highly active member of the Conservative Party for over 30 years
- First elected to House of Commons in 1984
- A long-standing record of membership in the Conservative Party of Canada shows Nicholson's firm belief in its ideals, its interests, and its policies.



Harper's Success Rating:

MODERATE

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

9. Placement of A “Roman Guard”

- Roman Guard: a Prime Minister's core group of loyalists in Cabinet who will defend him at all times from mutiny. – *The Way It Works*, Chapter 4, Pg. 60 (Goldenberg)
- **John Baird – Minister of Transport, Infrastructure & Communities**
 - Considered one of Harper's “top lieutenants” in Ontario and former co-chair of his Ontario campaign.
- **Diane Finley – Minister of H.R. & Skills Development**
 - Both her and her husband Doug have strong ties to Harper that go back for many years. Doug was Harper's National Campaign Manager in the 2006 and 2008 Federal elections.
- **Jim Flaherty – Minister of Finance**
- **Jim Prentice – Minister of the Environment**
- **Peter MacKay – Minister of National Defence**

Harper's Success Rating:

GOOD

FEDERAL CABINET

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

10. Appointment of the Competition

- The 2004 Conservative Party of Canada Leadership Convention in Toronto resulted in Harper beating out Tony Clement and Belinda Stronach to win leadership of the Party.



- The text *Political Management in Canada* points out a surprising trend in politics. This practice is that of the Prime Minister gives key opponents within his party important roles in his new Cabinet.
- **Tony Clement**
 - Appointed to Harper's first Cabinet in 2006
 - Currently serves as Minister of Industry

ANALYSIS OF HARPER'S CABINET

Harper's Poor Choice – Lisa Raitt

- As a senior government official, her actions served to completely embarrass both herself, her party, and the Harper Government.
- Mistakenly left highly confidential documents at CTV news studio following an interview.
- Commented on an audiotape recording that the very serious medical isotope shortage of 2009 was a “sexy” issue because it involved “radioactive leaks and cancer.”



THE FUTURE OF HARPER'S CABINET

- On January 16th, 2010, Veteran Affairs Minister Greg Thompson announced his **resignation**, effective immediately. This leaves at least one position to be filled in Cabinet.
- A **minor Cabinet shuffle**, termed as a “tweaking” by experts is expected to occur on Tuesday, January 19th, 2010.
 - It is highly unlikely that any of the “heavy-hitters” in Cabinet will be shuffled (Ministers of Finance, National Defence, Immigration, Foreign Affairs)

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