

QUEEN'S PRIVY COUNCIL FOR CANADA



Smolyanova
Alexandra
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The Queen's Privy Council for Canada is the group of cabinet ministers, former cabinet ministers and other prominent Canadians appointed to advise the Queen on issues of importance to the country. This includes both issues of state and constitutional affairs.



The Governor General appoints each privy councillor on the advice of the Prime Minister. Membership is for life, unless the Governor General withdraws the appointment – again on the Prime Minister's advice.

The Queen's Privy Council for Canada consists of:

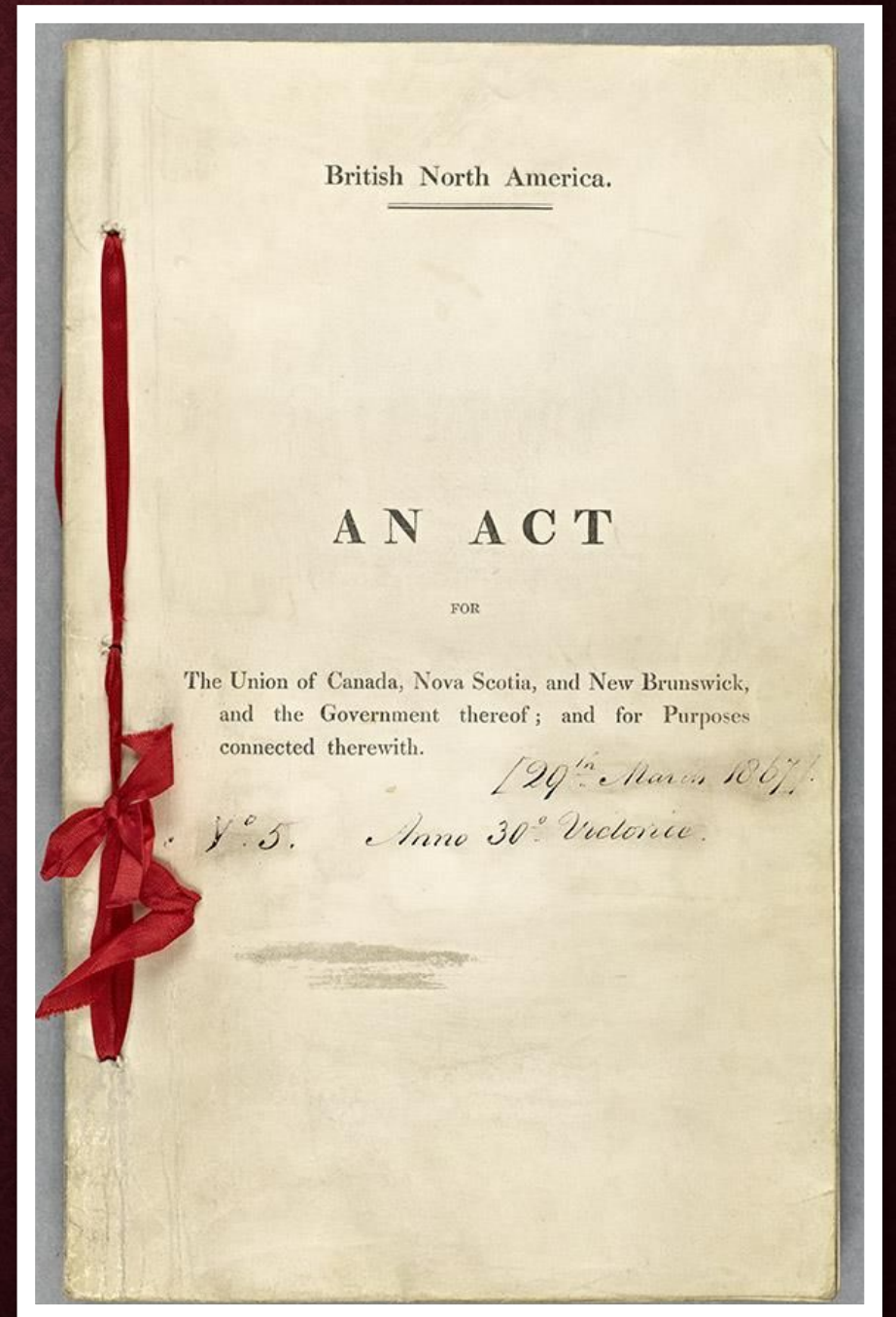
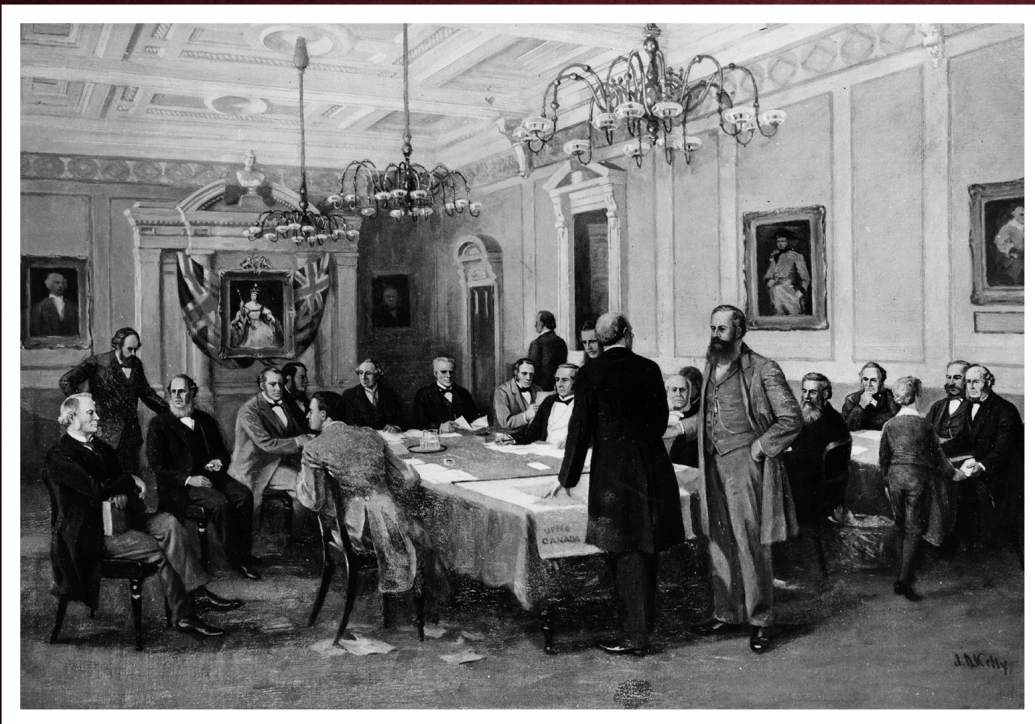
- Cabinet ministers
- Former cabinet ministers
- The Chief Justice of Canada
- Former chief justices
- Former speakers of the House of Commons
- Former speakers of the Senate
- Former Governors General
- Distinguished individuals (as a mark of honour)



Privy Councillors receive a document called a commission from the Governor General, summoning them to the Privy Council; swear two oaths: the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen, and the Oath of the Members of the Privy Council; and sign the Oath Book; carry the title "Honourable" for life and use the initials "P.C." after their names; are given a position of precedence on the Table of Precedence; and are honoured by half-masting of the flag on the Peace Tower upon their deaths.

HISTORY

The Queen's Privy Council was established by the British North America Act, **1867** (renamed the Constitution Act, 1867 in 1982), and is modelled on the Privy Council of the United Kingdom. Britain and Canada are the only two Commonwealth realms to have privy councils. They are equivalent, in practice, to the Executive Councils in Canadian provinces and some other Commonwealth jurisdictions.



First Members From Outside the Ministry



1891 – The first privy councillors were appointed from outside the ministry.

These included:

Two former speakers of the House of Commons
Three former speakers of the Senate

First Meeting Before the Sovereign

1957 – The Privy Council met before the Sovereign (Queen Elizabeth II) for the first time (Ottawa, October 14, 1957).



1957 – The first ‘swearing-in’ of a councillor before the Sovereign. This was the summoning of the Queen’s consort, Prince Philip.



First Woman Privy Councillor

1957 – the Right Honourable Ellen Fairclough became the first woman summoned to the Privy Council (June 21, 1957). She held the position of Secretary of State.



THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1957.

Political Cinderella

Ellen Fairclough

Special to The New York Times.

OTTAWA, June 21.—Canada's first woman cabinet minister, appointed today, has wavy white hair, the figure of a girl of 18, and a bubbling sense of fun that erupts in her sparkling brown eyes and humorous mouth.

Ellen Fairclough, the new Secretary of State, is utterly feminine. She loves pretty clothes and can engage in housewifely chit-chat. Yet she is credited with having "a man's mind." By this is meant her incisive intelligence and her hard-headed approach to matters in hand.

As a member of the Opposition Mrs. Fairclough (pronounced Fairclo) specialized in the welfare of labor and the rights of women. When she rose at question time in the House of Commons, Milton Gregg, Minister of Labor, and Paul Martin, Minister of Health and Welfare in the Liberal Government, were among those who braced themselves, if they did not actually wince. They knew that a hard fast ball was coming their way.



"Canada needs a woman's voice"

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Other Meetings Before the Sovereign

1959 – The Privy Council met before Queen Elizabeth II in Halifax to confirm the appointment of the Right Honourable Georges Vanier as Governor General. Largest Informal Meeting

Largest Informal Meeting

1982 – The largest informal gathering of the Privy Council took place at a luncheon on Parliament Hill (April 17, 1982.) They were celebrating the Queen's signing of the proclamation of the Constitution Act, 1982. Arranging a Meeting with the Queen



AUTHORITY AND DUTIES

The formal authority of the Queen's Privy Council is vested in the Canadian monarch, but is only exercised on the advice of the sovereign's Cabinet, which makes up a minority of the QPC's members. The actions of the Ministers of the Crown are supported by the Privy Council Office, which is headed by the Clerk of the Privy Council as chief civil servant, and the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada as the Cabinet minister in charge. Orders of the Governor in Council must almost always be made on the recommendation of a Privy Councillor, invariably a government minister.



Among the duties of the Privy Council is the proclamation of the new Canadian sovereign following a demise of the Crown, and to give consent to royal marriages. **The last formal meeting of the Privy Council was in 1981** to give formal consent to the marriage of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer. While all Privy Councillors are invited to such meetings in theory, in practice the composition of the meetings is determined by the Prime Minister of the day. According to a contemporary newspaper account, the March 27, 1981, meeting consisted of 12 individuals meeting at Government House, who were informed of the Prince's engagement, nodded their approval, and then toasted their decision with champagne. The twelve included Chief Justice of Canada Bora Laskin, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, several Cabinet ministers, Stanley Knowles of the New Democratic Party, and Alvin Hamilton of the Progressive Conservative Party. Palango, Paul; "Globe and Mail": Privy Council nod on royal betrothal 'medieval'; May 8, 1981]

Following the announcement of the Prince of Wales' engagement to Camilla Parker-Bowles, however, the Department of Justice announced its decision that the Privy Council was not required to meet to give its consent to the marriage as the union would not result in offspring and thus would have no impact on the succession to the throne. In 1981, David Brown, an official in the machinery of government section of the Privy Council Office, told "The Globe and Mail" that, in theory, had the Privy Council rejected the Prince of Wales' engagement there would be a break in the royal link between Canada and the other Commonwealth realms because none of his children would be considered heirs by the Canadian government, thus putting the country in a position to either set up its own monarchy or become a republic.

MEMBERSHIP

As of 2008, the membership of the QPC comprises all living current and former federal cabinet ministers, the Chief Justices of Canada, and all former Governors General. The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and leaders or other members of opposition parties are inducted into the Privy Council from time to time, either as an honour or so that sensitive information can be disclosed to them under the Security of Information Act. In addition, it is required by law that members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee be Privy Councillors, resulting in all nominees being sworn in if they are not already members. Other persons recommended by the Prime Minister have been sworn into the Privy Council as an honour. Under Paul Martin, Parliamentary Secretaries were sworn into the Privy Council.



Dominic LeBlanc

The President of the Queen's Privy Council for
Canada since 2018

Appointees to the Queen's Privy Council must recite the requisite oath:



"I, [name] , do solemnly and sincerely swear (declare) that I shall be a true and faithful servant to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, as a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council for Canada. I will in all things to be treated, debated and resolved in Privy Council, faithfully, honestly and truly declare my mind and my opinion. I shall keep secret all matters committed and revealed to me in this capacity, or that shall be secretly treated of in Council. Generally, in all things I shall do as a faithful and true servant ought to do for Her Majesty."



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION