

M. Abul Kashem Mozumder

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRIVY COUNCIL
OFFICES IN CANADA: A REVIEW OF THEIR ROLE IN
POLICY FORMULATION**

As their counterparts in many western countries, the central agencies in Canada perform a variety of functions which directly affect all other government agencies/departments. These functions are mainly co-ordination and inter-departmental development of policy, finalization and endorsement of policies which other departments must follow and the monitoring of departmental performance and output. Unlike the veteran bureaucrats within the traditional structure of the civil service, officials of central agencies are not burdened by the functional responsibilities associated with the administration of government programs. Since such fewer constraints exist to curtail the nature and scope of their activities, central agencies can collect, analyze and co-ordinate a wider variety of information gleaned from multiple sources. This flexibility enables them to assume multifunctional roles and exert a great deal of influence within the administrative machinery of the government.

Among the five key central agencies - Department of Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Privy Council Office (PCO) and the Federal-Provincial Relations Office (FPRO) in Canada, the

M. Abul Kashem Mozumder, Ph. D. teaches in the Department of Government and Politics, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka.

PMO and PCO are the most flexible units with input into the policy-making process. Their influence in the formation of public policy is felt right from the initiation of a policy to that of its finalization phase. Each and every policy proposal in Canada is also exerted through lobbying efforts; supporting or discrediting a policy, and through mediating or conciliating between disputing departments/agencies. The degree to which the PMO and the PCO become involved in policy development process is normally determined by the significance of the issue. Yet, significant or routine, the PMO and the PCO officials have the power and authority to affect the success of each policy proposal before it reaches the Cabinet. Consequently, these officials have constantly been "accused of deciding more than the elected government does".¹ The truth of this accusation is sustained in the discussion that follows by examining the role of the PMO and the PCO in the making of Canadian public policy.

An Overview of the PMO and the PCO

The purpose of the PMO is to function as a political technocracy, advising the Prime Minister (PM) of the political consequences and implications of competing strategic planning and substantive policy decisions². The PMO is also the communication link between the PM, the machinery of government, constituencies and the public. It prepares Prime Ministerial briefs concerning political issues and co-ordinates the interpretation and public explanation of government policies and programs. The PMO acts as the government's political guide, ensuring a comprehensive and coherent government program, consistent with its basic political philosophy and goals. In its most specific role, the PMO acts as the PM's

1. Quoted in Robert Lewis (1982); "Ottawa's Power Brokers" *Maclean's Magazine*, May 24, p. 20. For a detailed description of this accusation, see Flora MacDonald (1990), "The Minister and the Mandarins", *Policy Options*, Vol. 1, No. 3; and C. Campbell and G. Szablowski (1980), "The Centre and the Periphery: Superbureaucrats Relations with MPs and Senators" in H. Clarke, et. al., (eds), *Parliament. Policy and Representation* (Toronto: Methuen).

2. Robert Adie and Paul Thomas (1991), *Canadian Public Administration* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall), p. 110.

personal assistant: planning his travel program, supplying him with information concerning the political atmosphere of his destination, answering his day to day correspondence and co-ordinating his appointment schedule.

The PCO has a much broader mandate than the PMO. Generally, the PCO is expected to inform and advise the PM and the Cabinet on the relative feasibility of competing policy alternatives. It assists in the determination of priorities for Cabinet and Cabinet committees, and provides whatever assistance is required to facilitate the generation of sound government policy³. The PCO is the lead agency concerning strategic planning and substantive policy development. Concerning the allocation and management of physical resources and expenditure budgets, the PCO has shared authority with the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS). Responsibility for the co-ordination of appointments, evaluations and management of senior personnel is also shared with the TBS. The PCO assists in the analysis and co-ordination of information for other departments and central agencies. The PCO secretariat records the minutes of all committee meetings and submits briefing documents concerning these meetings to the Ministers and the PM. Once final decisions have been made on policy implementation and program allocation, the PCO is responsible for notifying all departments and agencies concerned.

Theoretically, the PMO is the PM's personal staff, paid through Cabinet by an Order-in-Council while the PCO is the staff of the Cabinet's Secretariat, paid through the Civil Service. Factually the distinction between the two agencies is blurred. They tend to work together, their roles being complimentary rather than competitive. The relationship between the PMO and PCO has been best described by Gordon Robertson: the "PMO is partisan, plitically oriented, yet operationally sensitive" while the "PCO is non-partisan, operationally oriented, yet politically sensitive."⁴

3. G. Robertson (1977), "The changing Role of the Privy Council Office" in Paul Fox (ed.), *Politics: Canada* (Toronto: McGraw Hill) p. 334.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

The PMO and PCO combine their roles primarily to keep total government policy action consistent. To ensure co-ordination, daily and weekly meetings involving the PM and PMO/PCO senior officials are held. During these meetings policies are discussed relative to short and long term goals. Information is co-ordinated and the PM is kept abreast of the entire machinery of government. The combined and complimentary activities of the PMO/PCO constitute an extremely powerful alliance. The broad nature of their functions involve them in every aspect of the policy-making process. Their consent is necessary for proposals to become policy.

Role of the PMO and the PCO in Policy Formulation

The duties of the PMO/PCO are performed at a level in the political system where political and senior bureaucratic actors converge. As these two agencies most directly support the PM in the discharge of his public and political responsibilities, their policy role is inherently biased toward Prime Ministerial preferences. The personal and political nature of the services they provide to the PM implies that the officials of the PMO/PCO are more aptly described as political administrators than neutral bureaucrats. The structure and organization of PMO/PCO reflects their accessibility to the PM and Cabinet and is a direct result of the Prime Minister's personal philosophy.⁵

It is not always the case that the PMO and PCO are a central part of the policy-making process. Until the late sixties, the bureaucratic establishment dominated public-policy formation. Years of experience gained through a series of governments and ministries enabled bureaucrats to develop a broad perspective and political acumen which ministers found indispensable. At that time, the only alternative sources of information available to the Minister were other party members, close friends or the press. No comparable alternative of Mandarin advice and expertise existed. The bureaucrat's expertise in policy development bound the minister to his

5. Robert Adie and Paul Thomas (1991), *op. cit.*, pp. 112-13.

staff. Through the control of essential information, and the ability to gain ministerial trust, the bureaucracy effectively directed the formulation of public policy.

The election of Pierre Trudeau in 1968 resulted in considerable changes in the locus of bureaucratic power at the federal level. Trudeau's particular personal philosophy about the way effective government should operate, determined the nature of the changes. The power of the civil service was curtailed, the policy making process rationalized and political information highly co-ordinated across ministries.

Trudeau's desire to curb the power of the civil service and particularly the political influence of the bureaucracy led to an increase in the size and influence of the PMO. The bureaucrat's technical advice was placed in competition with an enlarged and resturctured PCO. By developing a parallel bureaucracy of his own, Trudeau decreased the value of bureaucratic advice and brought the locus of policy-making power closer to the top of the political hearchy, nearer himself.⁶

The rationalization of the policy-making process leads to the elimination of the incremental approach to policy development, the creation of a regular schedule for Cabinet Committee meetings and the ability of these committees to make specific decisions. It was also hoped that in this way the excessive workload of the whole Cabinet would be diminished.

The practice of collegial examination of all policy options was adopted to assist Ministers in developing more co-ordinated policies and enabled them to participate in a broader examination of all viable alternatives and their consequences. To ensure the co-ordination of political information Trudeau expanded the role of the PMO as a source of political advice for Cabinet Ministers and an independent personal intelligence agency and political advisory unit for himself.

To supplement the regular scheduling of Cabinet Committee meetings, Cabinet Ministers were provided with a permanent secretariat supplied by

6. For details, see T. D Aquino (1977); "The Prime Minister's Office: Catalyst or Cable" in Paul Fox (ed), *Politics: Canada* (Toronto: McGraw Hill).

the PCO, which acted as an independent source of information of which their policy decisions could be based. This reduced bureaucratic control over individual ministries increased the PM's influence over Cabinet and Cabinet meetings. Unfortunately, the regular attendance of Ministers at Cabinet committee meetings effectively decreased the time available to them as individuals for thoughtful and independent consideration of all policy options.

As things are now organized, a department's policy proposal must be submitted to the appropriate channels in the PCO, accompanied by at least two counter-proposals before it can be considered at the Cabinet Committee level. The proposals from various ministries are examined by the PMQ, and co-ordinated by the PCO secretariat and memos are drafted for the Committee Chairman. The PCO sets the Cabinet Committee agendas and determines the priority in which proposals will be examined.

Once policy proposals pass the Committee stage, the Cabinet acts merely as a rubber stamp. Any question to be raised by any Minister in Cabinet meeting concerning policies passed in committee must submit this intention in writing, 24 hours before the policy is discussed in the Cabinet. Clearly, the PCO and PMO have the greatest potential to influence the direction that public policy will take.

The increases in power and responsibility of the PMO and PCO were partially a response to Ministerial need for greater independence from a powerful bureaucracy. The increasing demands of modern government, which required co-ordinated policies also hastened the growth of the PMO and PCO's role. But the most powerful incentive for an increased PMO/PCO role as mentioned earlier form the particular desires of Pierre Trudeau, who sought a more rational approach to policy formulation, a decrease in bureaucratic power and an increase in Prime Ministerial control over policy making process.

The Basis of Authority and Power of the PMO and the PCO

In order to clearly understand the role of the PMO and the PCO on the policy process it is necessary to determine whether the basis of their authority is executive or bureaucratic in nature. Within the Canadian political system, there are two sources of authority; statutory laws, which are written, and conventional rules which although unwritten, are a very important and closely observed part of the Canadian political tradition. Statutory laws are the usual source of bureaucratic authority. The source of the PM and Cabinet's authority is conventional rules.

Similarly, the PMO's authority has evolved entirely from convention. It is not proclaimed a department under the Financial Administration Act 1954. Neither does it claim its own budget. The budget allocation for the PMO is hidden within PCO budget estimates. Moreover, the most powerful position in the PMO, that of the Principal Secretary, lacks legal status and has an unspecified amount of authority. As a result, the PMO acts on the basis of executive authority delegated directly from the PM.

The advantages of operating on the basis of executive authority delegated from the PM, vis-a-vis other central agencies, is that the PMO has far greater discretion and flexibility in the execution of its activities. The amount of authority delegated by the PM may simply be assumed. This enables an officer in the PMO to undertake any amount of tasks for which the PM is constitutionally responsible without formal directives.

The implication of this transfer of executive authority is that the PMO has free hand. In effect it is able to act within the system, and without restriction, as long as the PM is not displeased with the results of their activities.

Unlike the PMO, the PCO is given statutory authority as the basis for some of its activities. Still most are carried out pursuant to conventional authority delegated from the PM and Cabinet. Although the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet has a statutory base to his position, most of their present functions are based on conventional authority.

As PCO activities rest on executive authority delegated from the PM and Cabinet, it has powers "over and above" the statutory authority which is delegated through Parliament. The PCO has cultivated units of expertise in areas of policy development which coincide with those bestowed by statute on other agencies and departments, particularly the TBS and the Department of Finance. As a result, the boundaries of jurisdiction and authority between the PCO and other departments and agencies are blurred. The PCO ultimately dominates in areas where the bureaucracy is duplicated and interests compete.⁷

Unrestrained by statutory restriction, it is difficult to hold the PMO and PCO publicly accountable for their actions. The executive nature of their authority makes the distinction between senior PMO/PCO officials and Ministers unclear. The flexibility of conventional authority allows the PM to delegate sufficient power to the Clerk of the Privy Council that he could act as an assistant PM. In a time of national crisis it is speculated that the PMO and PCO would assist the PM in the management of the country, the Clerk of the Privy Council acting as the PM's closest assistant.⁸

In light of the enormous potential for authority possessed by the PMO/PCO, it is not surprising that they are staffed by individuals whose views are sought when key decisions are made. The personnel in the PMO/PCO are a relatively homogenous group in terms of profession, attitude, socio-economic background and education. Almost all have backgrounds in either legal, business or communication professions and many have been personally acquainted with the PM prior to their political careers. As a group, they are more aptly described as pragmatists than party men strongly motivated by "personal satisfaction and efficacy, coupled with the reality of high incomes"⁹ than by party loyalty. Their socio-economic background is middle or upper-class. Almost all are equipped with university degrees and many of them have Ph. D's or other specialized academic qualifications.

7. C. Campbell and G. Szablowski (1979), *The Superbureaucrats* (Toronto: Macmillan), p. 44.

8. S. Wilson (1981), *Canadian Public Policy and Administration* (Toronto: McGraw Hill), p. 280.

9. Campbell and Szablowski (1979), *op. cit.*, p. 197.

In staffing the PMO/PCO, the traditional values for staffing the bureaucracy have been overlooked. Merit, seniority and in house experience have been replaced by intellectual originality, pragmatism, personal acquaintance with the PM, upward mobility, and youth. With this as the criteria for staffing, it is no surprise that the officials of the PMO/PCO are considered a breed apart from the average bureaucrat.

The most powerful position in the PMO is that of Principal Secretary. This position and other senior PMP positions are all filled through personal appointment by the PM. The staff of the PMO are selected to aid the PM and his elected officials in their role as politicians as opposed to policy-makers. The PMO personnel are part of the para-political bureaucracy, paid from the public purse but performing tasks of a partisan nature. Most appointed positions in the PMO are held by outsiders whose relationship with the PM is based on business or personal ties rather than previous political associations.

Similarly, senior PCO officials are also drawn from the PM's pool of personal friends. The PCO staff are considered to be PM's personal team. The appointed staff is most often composed of young, well educated and attractive lawyers. Additional staff members are Ottawa's brightest and best young men, seconded from other parts of the bureaucracy for terms of 3-5 years. A stint in the PCO is considered a feather in a bureaucrat's cap and as a result, a PCO appointment is considered prestigious. The key position in the PCO is that of Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet. The bearer of this title has unequalled responsibilities and powers. As the foremost civil servant in the country he is considered potential Co-Prime Minister or assistant PM.¹⁰

The personnel in the PMO and PCO are changing constantly due to changes in the political environment, changes over time and according to the PM's preferences. The staff of both agencies maintain a low profile, yet compose a strong foundation of power which supports the PM. Prime Ministerial loyalty reflects the fact that senior officials owe their appointment to the PM.

10. Wilson (1981), *op. cit.* p. 280.

An aura of elitism surrounds the PMO and PCO. Their pragmatic and political perceptions are more akin to those of businessmen than bureaucrats. Their outlook, combined with tremendous power has earned them a fitting nickname, "the superbureaucrats".¹¹

The PMO and the PCO: Supportive Linkages

Within the political system, the tradition of collective responsibility makes all Cabinet Ministers equally responsible for the quality of public policy generated therein. Yet, the workload of Cabinet Ministers is excessive. In addition to commitments to Parliament, party and constituents, they are on at least five and as many as eight committees.¹² It would be impossible for Cabinet Ministers to have sufficient time, information or expertise to develop effective policies on their own. Consequently, they rely on PCO/PMO intelligence to direct their policy-making decisions.

The PCO is used by the PM and his Ministers as a lever, ensuring policies and programs conform to overall government strategies. Recommendations from department officials are no longer routinely accepted by Ministers who lack the expertise to question them effectively. Instead, recommendations are passed on to the independent PCO secretariat for analysis and evaluation. Ministers have come to trust PCO decision to the extent that they often invite these officials to act on their behalf.

Ministerial attitudes toward the PCO facilitate its control over the policy process, but the key to the PCO's power lies in its access to and control of information. The PCO has representation on all formal, inter-departmental co-ordinating committees, subcommittees, work groups and Cabinet meetings.¹³ It also has direct access to information generated by Task Forces and Royal Commissions. Furthermore, confidential information and decisions are made available to PCO officials.

11. Campbell and Szablowski (1979), *op. cit.*

12. Lewis (1982), *op. cit.*, p. 27.

13. B. Williams (1990); "The para-Political Bureaucracy in Ottawa" in H. Clarke, *et. al.* (eds.) *Parliament, Policy and Representation* (Toronto: Methuen) p. 173.

The PCO filters, organizes and rationalizes the mass of internally and externally generated information. Since all policy proposals must be submitted to the PCO for scrutinization prior to submission to the appropriate Cabinet Committee, the PCO acts as a gatekeeper; controlling the movement of information upward and downward in the hierarchy.

As a result of its access to and control of information the PCO determines how much, how quickly and to whom information is distributed. Based on their own discretion, the PCO regularly decides which policy options are made available to Cabinet. By manipulating the Cabinet and Cabinet Committee agendas, the PCO also decides the order of priority in which the proposals will be presented.

While analyzing policy proposals and summarizing documents in the preparation of Ministerial briefs, the PCO determines what information is valuable to the Minister and what isn't. Officials can present a biased view of the information contained in Ministerial briefs, in order to support a particular policy. On the other hand, a Minister may be given only partial information on a subject, while the required information is delayed or withheld. Confidential analysis that finds its way into the hands of unauthorized bureaucrats is another trick used by the PCO to mobilize internal forces against a policy proposal, and thereby causing substantial delay.¹⁴

The PCO also affects the policy-making process in less direct ways. Their potential influence on policy through the enforcement of inter-departmental co-ordination is considerable. Securing the resolution of inter-departmental conflict allows the PCO to determine which policies prevail by supporting one department over another. Their lobbying efforts on particular issues can determine in which direction policies are developed. The PCO's mandate also allows it to determine which programs should be

14. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

cut and where responsibility for new programs will be assigned. Subsequently departments develop strong informal connections within the PCO which can help to guarantee the safe passage of their particular policy output.

In the area of policy initiation, PCO analysts predict future problems and encourage Cabinet or departmental policy response. The PCO may propose independently if significant policy areas have overlooked, or merely return departmental proposals with suggestions for improvement. Often the legitimacy of the PCO as a source of substantive policy advice is a reflection of particularly forceful, respected or popular personalities holding key positions within the agency.

The PCO initiates internal policy for appointing, dismissing and managing senior officials, it also indirectly affects policies and strategies adopted by a department through its allocation of financial resources.

Although the PCO is able to dominate policy formation through policy initiation, priority determination, inter-departmental co-ordination, policy proposal analysis and facilitation or restriction of information and limitations on the PCO's policy influence do exist. The PCO lacks the capacity to generate all of the information required to directly develop or expertly analyze each and every policy alternative. It remains dependent on the bureaucratic technocracy to some extent for this reason. Although this may rarely occur, the ultimate limitation on the PCO's policy role is that the Cabinet may completely disregard its advice.

Compared with the role of the PCO in policy-making, the influence of the PMO is much more indirect. Primarily, the PMO plays a switchboard function for the PM, filtering all incoming information and redirecting to him what it perceives as valuable.

Concerning policy formation, the PMO ensures that it has a constant political input into the policy process. The representatives of the PMO are present at the earliest stages of policy formation to guarantee that political considerations are accounted for. In addition, all proposals received by the PCO are also scrutinized by the PMO. The PMO may attempt to directly influence policy by actively promoting specific proposals or by advising the PM on which department to support concerning policy disputes. The PMO may articulate its view through the PCO. The two agencies frequently ally to win over Cabinet to a particular viewpoint.¹⁵ The PMO's practice of filtering information and ability to determine the priority of inflowing data also has an effect on which policies are ultimately considered by Cabinet. The PMO secretariat determines which policy options are ultimately available at the Cabinet level by deciding who will be allowed an appointment with the PM and when. They make value judgements on a daily basis, concerning what correspondence will be brought to the Prime Ministerial level for attention. Likewise, the PMO's interpretation of opinions expressed by the press can undoubtedly influence the popularity of a particular policy direction.

The degree to which the PMO actively involves itself in the policy-making process is determined to a great extent by the personal approach of the Principal Secretary, the nature of the political environment and the pet interests of the Prime Minister.¹⁶

The PMO generally stresses the switchboard function, ceding policy analysis to the PCO. A lack of staff limits the PMO's capacity for indepth analysis and acts as a constraint on their opportunity to influence policy. The limited staff of the PMO have specialized jobs. This restricts the analysis or generation of policy proposals to a few individuals who are concerned primarily with areas determined by the PM.

15. For an elaborate explanation of this statement, see Flora MacDonald (1990); S. Wilson (1981); G. Robertson (1977); and R. Lewis (1982), *op. cit.*

16. W. Stewart (1971), *Shrug: Trudeau in Power* (Toronto: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey), p. 166.

It appears that the policy-making power of officials of the PCO and PMO is derived from their proximity to the PM and their ability to interact freely with him, a vantage point in the political system from which they can realize the interconnectedness of policies, their frequent opportunities to act and speak on behalf of the Cabinet or PM with appropriate authority and their control over vital information.¹⁷

The ability to legitimately give advice to, and make decisions for constitutionally responsible members of government directly involves the PMO and PCO in the determination of Canadian public policy.

Concluding Observations

The most conspicuous and serious problem resulting from the PMO and PCO's role in the policy making process is the lack of accountability. The absence of accountability for these agencies is a reflection of the weak control exercised by the House of Commons over the executive and the bureaucracy, and the fact that the PMO and PCO are by nature protected from public scrutiny.

Although most policies are developed by bureaucrats, with the direction of the PMO/PCO, there are many cases where the meticulously prepared proposals of departmental experts are reversed or weak policies are facilitated by the PCO. This act of overruling expert opinion is solely a Ministerial prerogative, but policies that pass the committee stage, rarely receive more than a cursory review from Cabinet before becoming bills¹⁸. The small group of officials in the PMO/PCO derive their authority directly from the PM and this executive authority allows them to determine public policy without direct accountability to Parliament. Their authority is unrestricted by the PM so long as he is satisfied with the results. The PMO and PCO are basically unrestrained in the active pursuit of the public interest as they perceive it.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

18. Flora MacDonald (1990), *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

Not only is a structural form of accountability lacking, there is also a distinct absence of a "sense" of accountability for action, within the staff of the PMO and PCO. These officials interpret accountability as personal loyalty to the PM. The PCO officials don't feel even partly accountable to the public and rarely consult outsiders¹⁹. As a result of their low profile, executive authority and Prime Ministerial protection, the PMO and PCO seemed to continue to be independent of any direct form of accountability for their role in the making of public policy. If the machinery of Canadian government is to be kept in check, then it is crucial that these senior officials who participate in the decision-making process, often to greater degree than Cabinet Ministers themselves, be made directly accountable for their activities.

Less pressing, yet significant is the bureaucratic and inter-agency conflict arising as a result of the PMO and PCO's role as an alternate centre of power within policy process. Bureaucrats in operating departments are resentful of the PMO and PCO's power over Parliament as well as procedural and substantive policy decisions. Although the PMO and the PCO staff is too small to perform all the decision making required, more and more final decision-making occurs at this level. The departmental bureaucracy resents PCO criticism and revision of their carefully developed policy proposals. As a result, they attempt to develop policy to best suit the PMO/PCO rather than consciously design the best policy possible.

Ministers and departments that are forced to comply with the procedures and suggestions of the PMO/PCO appear to feel that the amount of control they have concerning matters they are accountable for is restricted. In addition, the PM has virtually made himself independent of the operational departments of the civil service since the expanded PMO and PCO can act as his source of policy initiation²⁰. The effect this has had is to frustrate, alienate and restrict the civil service.

19. Campbell and Szablowski (1979), *op. cit.*, p. 221.

20. W. Stewart (1971), *op. cit.*, p. 168.

The most celebrated inter-agency conflict exist between the Department of Finance and the PCO over which agency has the final word on economic policy. The PCO has thwarted co-ordinated policy proposals of Finance and other departments for technically insignificant reasons. They have also been known to second guess economic/ finance policy. The PCO has a reputation for meddling in economic matters which are not primarily their concern.²¹

The other agency the PCO most often comes into conflict with is the Treasury Board Secretariat. Regarding the review of new expenditure programs, the TBS's statutory authority is rendered impotent against the executive authority of the PCO. In order to win Cabinet's approval of a policy, PCO officials facilitate new programs backed by key Ministers that wouldn't pass TBS scrutiny. In turn, the TBS feels unable to exercise sufficient authority to fulfill its responsibility for expenditure control²².

Other agencies and departments that require PCO support to get their policies passed lobby PCO officials and develop personal connections with them to ensure that their goals will be realized. This practice effectively bypasses the institutionalized process altogether, making a mockery of the entire policy process.

Despite the drawbacks associated with the policy role of the PMO/PCO there are some positive aspects which deserve special mention. The expanded role of the PCO/PMO has made Ministers more informed on a wider range of issues and government activities, and has enabled policies and programs to be much more co-ordinated and integrated. The time consumed by policy debate in the Cabinet meeting has decreased while the government's capability for formulating long range planning has increased.

Present trends indicate the continued development of central agencies. Continued expansion of the role of the PMO and PCO will be the result of the increased collegiality between senior bureaucrats and politicians, the decline of Parliament as an effective instrument of political control and the fact that the PMO and PCO are unaffected by government restraint programs²³.

21. Campbell and Szablowski (1979), *op. cit.*, p. 82.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

23. W. Stewart (1979), *op. cit.*, p. 179.

In the light of their extensive role in the policy making process, future growth of the PMO and PCO stresses the urgent need for a solution to their lack of accountability. No easy solution exists to curb their unbridled powers over the policy process. Their power could be diffused if a more equal amount of power and authority were shared between the PMO, the PCO, the Department of Finance and the TBS. This relative equilibrium could be achieved if Finance and TBS didn't have to operate through PCO channels in order to submit policy proposals to Cabinet Committees. Although Finance and TBS would be required to co-ordinate information with the PCO, they would no longer be required to defer to them.

In order to regulate the PCO, it seems necessary to make it accountable to parliament. Since the Clerk of the Privy Council works very closely with the MP and acts as assistant PM in a time of crisis, the authorities and responsibilities of this position could be divided amongst two people. One position would remain with the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet. The other would be a new creation, a position superior to the Clerk of the Privy Council - the position of Deputy PM. The Deputy PM would be the official head of the PCO and would be answerable to the Parliament for the overall activities of the PCO. The PM would remain directly accountable for activities in the PMO. Although their extensive powers over the policy-making process would not be decreased, in this way the PMO and PCO would be directly accountable through their respective "Ministers" to the Parliament.

After examining the role played by the PMO and the PCO in the formulation of Canadian public policy, the truth is quite clear. In most cases, the appointed officials within the PMO and PCO do have a greater influence over the policy process than the elected Ministers. If this trend is to continue in the future, these two central agencies should have to accept more responsibility for their actions through accountability to Parliament and become less a self-directing group of superbureaucrats, acting independently of the departmental bureaucracy, Parliament and the public at large.