

HANDOUT 2: The Branches of Government

Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch includes the House of Commons, the Senate and the Queen (represented by the Governor General of Canada). The principal role of this branch is to make laws for the governance of the nation. Members of the Commons are elected by the voting public while members of the Senate are appointed by the Governor General (on the advice of the Prime Minister).

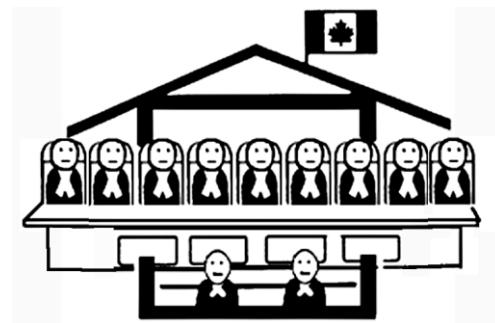


Executive Branch

The Executive Branch includes the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Queen (represented by the Governor General). The principal role of this branch is to enact and enforce the laws of the nation. The Cabinet is chosen by the Prime Minister and can include senators, but generally it is composed of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the ruling party. It is customary to have at least one cabinet member from each province and it is common to have 10-12 ministers chosen from Ontario and Quebec. More recently, women, ethnic minorities and Aboriginal representation are appointed to the cabinet.

Judicial Branch

This branch is comprised of the Supreme Court of Canada and its nine judges, the Federal Court of Canada and the superior courts of the provinces. The primary function of the judicial branch is to interpret and apply the laws made by Parliament. Supreme Court of Canada judges are appointed by the Governor General, on the advice of the Prime Minister, and have the authority of being the “court of last resort” in Canada.



To learn more about the branches of government, visit the Parliament of Canada website at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/>.