Forming a Government

What takes place after an election?



Prime Minister Hon. Philip Brave Davis

- The leader of the winning party becomes the **Prime Minister**.
- He/ She is sworn in by the Governor-General.
- The Governor-General invites the leader to form a new government.
- The leader of the party with the second highest votes becomes the **Leader of the Opposition**.

The Cabinet



- The first duty of the new Prime Minister is to form a **Cabinet**.
- The people who serve as **Cabinet Ministers** help to make the decisions of the Government of the Bahamas.
- The is made up of at least nine (9) members, including the Prime Minister.
- Some Cabinet Ministers will be members of the House of Assembly. Others will serve in the Senate.

Responsibilities of Cabinet Ministers

- They assist the Prime Minister in carrying out the government's policies and programs.
- Each Cabinet Minister has a **PORTFOLIO** or a set of duties for which he/she is responsible.
- Cabinet Ministers are assisted by **PERMANENT SECRETARIES** who help them perform their duties.
- Cabinet Ministers are responsible for new laws or important new schemes related to their portfolios.
- These new laws or schemes are discussed by the Cabinet before going to Parliament.

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- Cabinet Ministers are responsible for whatever happens in the department under their portfolios.
- However, the Prime Minister must accept full responsibility for all his government does or neglects to do.

House of Assembly

- The members of the House of Assembly are known as Members of Parliament (MPs).
- These MPs are elected by Bahamian voters and serve for five (5) years.
- Members of the Opposition, individuals who are a part of the opposing governing party who are elected for their constituencies, also meet in the House of Assembly to discuss the business of the country.



Business of the House of Assembly

- MPs of both the Governing Party and the Opposition discuss and amend **Bills**.
- A Bill is introduced and read **three (3)** times in the House of Assembly.
- It is debated and after the third reading it (if successful), the Bill becomes an **Act**.
- The Act is then sent to the Senate for approval.

The Speaker of the House of Assembly (Patricia Deveaux)

- The Speaker of the House of Assembly presides over the House while it is in session.
- The Speaker is responsible for maintaining order and discipline.
- He/she will ask the Sargent-at-Arms to escort a Member of Parliament out of a meeting to maintain order, if needed.



- He/she does not take part in debates and must not favor any party. He/she will only vote if there is a tie.
- The Speaker is assisted by a Deputy Speaker who presides in his/her absence.

The Senate



- The Senate has sixteen (16) members.
- After forming his cabinet, the Prime Minister advises the Governor-General to appoint nine (9) Senators.
- Four (4) Senators are appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition.

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- The last three (3) Senators are appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister after consulting the Leader of the Opposition.



President of the Senate (Senator Lashell Adderley)

Business of the Senate

- After Senators are appointed and sworn in, a President and Leader of the Senate are elected. They help to keep order during meetings.
- During their meetings, Senators discuss and amend Bills passed from the House of Assembly.
- Senators make sure new laws are clear and precise.

Speech from the throne



- The Speech from the Throne is read by the Governor General at a special Opening Ceremony of Parliament following each General Election.
- The document is prepared by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet Members.
- It outlines the Government's plans for their term (the next five years).

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