

# Reprint **Island Tides**

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## ***Dealing With Government XII***

### ***Confidential Policy Memo - Patrick Brown***

*The following confidential memorandum to all cabinet ministers was leaked to Island Tides. (Actually, we wrote this leaked memo after it became apparent that Island Tides was the only media outlet in BC that hadn't had one..)*

**PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
MEMORANDUM  
FOR YOUR EYES ONLY  
CABINET CONFIDENTIAL  
EAT OR BURN AFTER READING**

From: Office of the His Eminems the Premier  
To: Cabinet Ministers, lackeys and varlets  
Subject: Policy guidelines for non-public cabinet meetings

Our public cabinet meetings have been very successful in enabling the government to communicate its agenda to the public by utilizing free air time provided by the various television stations. Ministers should be congratulated for the succinct and well-rehearsed nature of their presentations. Don't worry, you should all get your turn.

In contrast, however, our non-public cabinet meetings have become more lengthy because of a tendency towards discussion. In order to make these meetings more efficient, and thus expedite provincial government business, it has been decided that the following guidelines should apply to all future cabinet meetings. As you may realize, the approach used has been successful in dealing with the First Nations land claims situation.

#### **1. POLICY**

Cabinet meetings should deal with major policy decisions ONLY. All other matters should be ignored.

#### **2. WORDING OF POLICY**

To avoid confusion, major policy decisions should be presented in the most general terms as simple statements with yes or no answers, with the recommended policy indicated by a 'yes' answer. The correct answer should be circled on your ballot. For example:

The government should not run a deficit. YES no  
This example also illustrates the correct wording of all policy statements through the use of the word 'should'. Unequivocal

language should not be used.

#### **3. POLICY ON POLICY**

All proposed policies should be presented as guidelines, in order to avoid any confusion over whether the government should be bound by cabinet decisions, particularly negative ones.

Policies brought forward for adoption should be based on principle, election promises, or both. However, this does not mean that all election promises need necessarily be adopted as policy, or that policy need necessarily be based on principles. For greater clarity and to make this policy on policies absolutely clear, if that's the way it is, so be it.

#### **4. PREPROCESSING OF POLICY POLICY**

All recommended policies should be understood and approved by the premier before they may be brought forward to the meeting. In preparing material for cabinet, sufficient time should be allowed for this step.

#### **5. POLICY ON DISCUSSION OF POLICY**

In discussions, only simple expressions of support for yes or no answers should be permitted. Additional comments should be ruled out of order. Profanity should not be permitted.

Ministers not expressing support for the recommended alternative should be ignored, and may not be invited to the next cabinet meeting.

Cabinet meetings are not the place to raise alternatives to recommended policies. In order to expedite meetings and achieve maximum efficiency, the meeting should focus only on clear decision making.

In order to maintain cabinet secrecy and solidarity, ministers should be discouraged from discussing cabinet matters outside of cabinet. For greater clarity, and to avoid unnecessary changes in preconceived opinions, ministers should not have discussions with each other or anyone else, particularly when I am not there.

#### **6. POLICY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

Implementation should not be a concern of cabinet, and should not be confused with policy. Similarly, policy should not be concerned with implementation. Implementation should be the

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responsibility of individual ministers by whatever means they see fit. Heaven knows there are enough of you.

**7. FINANCIAL POLICY POLICY**

In making decisions, the government's immediate financial situation should be the prime consideration. For coffee or tea in cabinet meetings, ministers' departments will be charged 50¢.

**SPECIAL POLICY NOTE:**

The word 'should' should not be taken to indicate any uncertainty or lack of resolve, but should be employed in the Trudeauvian sense, as in 'the universe unfolding as it should'. However, unfolding of any sort should not be permitted in cabinet meetings. /