

Branches of Government

In Canada, as in all democratic countries, the government is divided into three branches. Each of the branches has a different duty:



Legislative: in charge of making laws



Executive: in charge of running the country and enforcing the laws



Judicial: in charge of deciding who broke the law and the punishment that corresponds

Take the following example:

Mr. Liu has given the class a work period. Unfortunately, many students were unfocused and productive work was not being done. Many students were socializing, walking around the class, and distracting one another. Mr. Liu announces that there shall be no more talking or moving freely in the classroom for the remainder of the period.

This is an example of Mr. Liu exercising his **legislative power**. He made a rule: "There will be no more talking or moving around in the classroom."

The class was quiet and on task for a few minutes, until a brave person decides to challenge the new rule. This person turns to the students behind him and started to talk loudly about a popular video game. Mr. Liu tells the student to stop talking or he'll have to face the consequences.

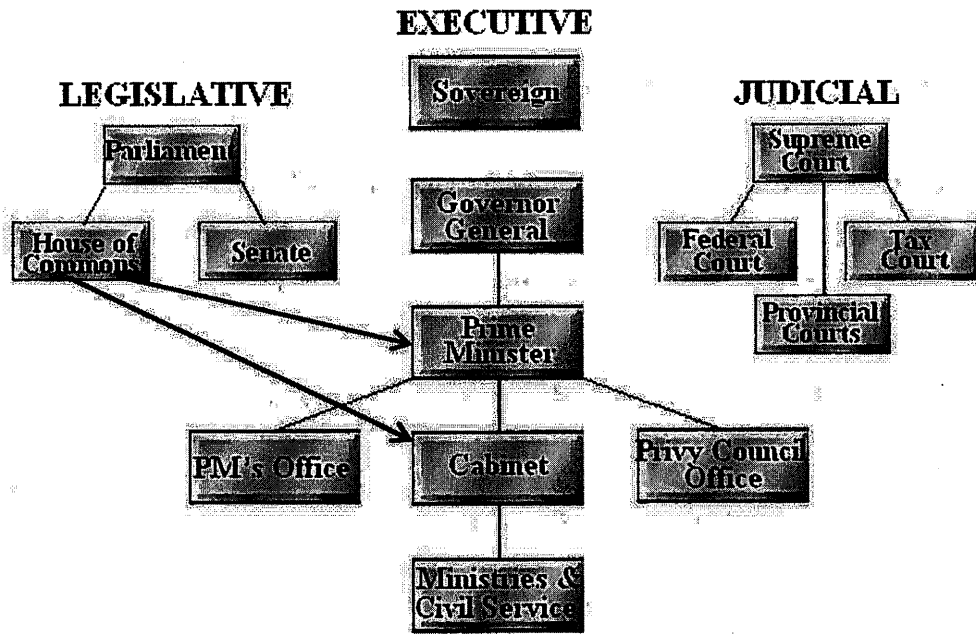
This time, Mr. Liu used his **executive power**. He carried out the rule that he made earlier in the class by telling the student to stop talking.

Sometime later, another student sitting close to you started talking. Mr. Liu turns to you and tells you to stop talking, to which you reply, "I wasn't talking. It was little Johnny who was talking." With the entire class looking on, Mr. Liu will have to decide if the noise was caused by you or by Johnny.

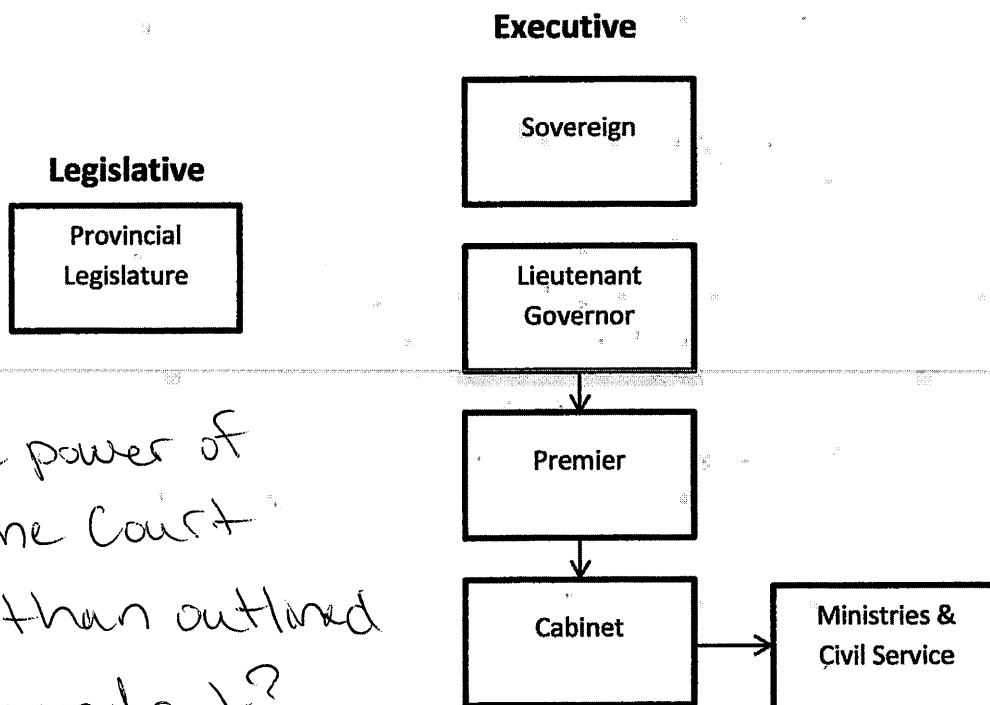
Mr. Liu is using his **judicial power**. He has to judge the guilt / innocence of you and/or Johnny. He also has to decide on the consequences that will be faced by the guilty party. Should it be a verbal warning or a trip to the principal's office?

The three **branches** of government exist in all three **levels** of government (federal, provincial, and municipal).

Structure of the Federal Government



Structure of the Provincial Government



How is the power of the Supreme Court different than outlined in this handout?