

The Position of the President in the Finnish Political System

It has been said that the modern meaning of Constitution as a restricting juridical factor is not as clear as it was in the past, when its most important function was to limit the use of power on the part of the king, until then an absolute ruler, and to bind it to law.¹ This criticism, however, is perhaps somewhat exaggerated, and is based on a half-truth. Constitutional laws continue to be of great significance, particularly in federal states, where they define the boundary between the legislative powers and other areas of competence of the central government and the member states. Moreover, constitutional law has gained importance in recent times as a safeguard of civil rights against interference from the state or from parliament. This function has gained particular importance nowadays when many countries have subjected their laws to judicial review as to their constitutionality.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the norms of the constitution and the forms stipulated by them, according to which the executive power has to make its decisions and take measures have become somewhat out of date. Perhaps the main reason for this has been the central position assumed by the parties in the political system. Especially in the parliamentary system the government leans on the parties, and there is almost nothing left of the former polarity between the government and parliament. As real power has become concentrated in the cabinet, the head of state has become more or less a figure-head and, as has been said, an advisor of his former advisors; in the event of a conflict between him and the cabinet, the decisive part is no longer played by juridical norms but by political considerations.

This general picture of the parliamentary system, however, does not hold true for the Finnish system of government. The president is a power factor of considerable importance, and has perhaps become even more so in recent times. Furthermore, legal norms continue to play a considerable part. This situation has come about as the result of a number of historical and structural factors.

First of all, Finnish political life has a strong legalistic and in particular constitutional heritage. This is something we share with our former mother country, Sweden, but it became even more pronounced in Finland after we were joined to Russia as an autonomous Grand Duchy, subject to the absolute Czar of Russia, in 1809. This subjection lasted for over a hundred years, during the last decades of which we had to fight a bloodless but bitter battle to preserve our constitutional system. This close attachment to the norms of the constitution is also indicated by the fact that Finland has never resorted to a constitutional or a national convention to frame a new constitution; reforms and innovations have always been carried out within the framework of the forms enjoined by earlier constitutional laws. For example, both the transition in 1906 from a most oldfashioned and narrowly based four-estate Diet

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to a most modern and democratic Parliament, and the transition in 1917–19 – admittedly with great difficulty – from a monarchy to a parliamentary republic, were particularly abrupt and sharp shifts. Yet, they were carried out precisely in the manner prescribed by the earlier constitution.

Perhaps the constitutional heritage and its integral continuity also began earlier here in northern Europe than elsewhere. As a reaction to the serious defects of the period of absolute monarchy, detailed fundamental laws were put through as early as 1719–1723, regulating not only the activity of the Diet but also the relationship between the executive and the legislative power, as well as the sphere of activity of the king and his council. The king was bound to make his decisions only in the presence of a more or less full session of his council, in which records were kept and in which he had two votes, in addition to the decisive vote in a draw. There was also a legal arrangement guaranteeing that the composition of the Council would change according to which of the two parties had the majority of seats in the Diet.

As a reaction to the drawbacks of the excessive power of the estates during this period, a new constitution was drawn up in 1772; as a result, executive power shifted to the head of state so decisively that later the Russian Czar (as Grand Duke of Finland) could content himself with it until the last couple of decades.

The overthrow of the Czar in St. Petersburg in March 1917 was followed by a period of interregnum. At this time Finland was able to free herself from Russia and to set up an independent state, but conditions became settled only after the uprising of our left wing, aiming at a socialist revolution, was put down in the following year.

With the interregnum and a bloody Civil War behind us and a Bolshevik Russia next to us, it was natural that we tried to create as strong an executive as possible. This was considered practicable by means of a strong head of state. The victors of the Civil War tried to set up a monarchy, but this attempt failed, in part because of the large majority required by the Constitution. In the end a republic was set up, in which the Constitution (1919) aimed at giving the President as strong a position as possible, while at the same time the Cabinet was made dependent on the confidence of Parliament (§ 36).

The Constitution also tried to strengthen the position of the President by having him elected not by the 200-member Parliament but by a separate 300-member Electoral College, as in the USA, the Electors, however, being chosen in a separate popular election. The President was also given the most important powers, such as the position of Commander-in-Chief, the right to dissolve Parliament, the introduction of new legislation in Parliament and the approval of bills passed by the legislature, together with the veto power, which can be overridden only by a newly elected Parliament. The President was also given the power to direct foreign policy (§ 33) and to appoint the most important officials.

The Cabinet which he appoints is not obliged to come before the Parliament to receive the vote of confidence, nor has this become an established practice. In keeping with the old tradition (and with present-day practice in Sweden), the Head of State is bound to make his decisions (with the exception of those made as Commander-in-Chief) in a Cabinet session, upon presentation by the appropriate minister (§ 34). The articles of the Constitution are furthermore formulated in such a way that the Cabinet has no legal power to prevent the President from making decisions according to his personal views; it can only refuse to carry out the President's decision if it is illegal, and a minister can refuse to countersign it if it is actually in conflict with the Constitution (§ 35 and 45). The President on the other side has at his immediate disposal only a staff that is small enough to be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The presidents of Finland have in fact used all these powers, some of them actually in opposition to a majority of the Cabinet or even to a unanimous Cabinet. Such use of power by the President has been politically possible and sometimes even necessary for many reasons. Perhaps the most important reason has been the need for a strong executive in many periods

of internal or external political difficulties, together with the fact that cabinets were weak for long periods of time.

Already in the infancy of the new Constitution, purposeful leadership was necessary for instance in ending the war with Russia and concluding the Peace of Dorpat (1920), and in preventing the annexation of the Åland archipelago to Sweden. Our strong-willed first President, K. J. Ståhlberg (1919–25), was able to refuse the public demand of General C. G. Mannerheim, his great rival at that time, to attack St. Petersburg and capture it from the Bolsheviks in favor of the White Russians. A few years later he was able to cope with a difficult conflict, brought about in certain officer circles, which questioned his authority as Commander-in-Chief. He was able to reduce the political tension sharpened by the after-effects of the Civil War, although he found it necessary, against the will of the Cabinet, to dissolve Parliament in 1924, when it was numerically reduced due to the imprisonment of the Communist representatives. The government resigned and the President made his decision to dissolve Parliament in a session of a Temporary Cabinet composed of Civil Servants whom he had appointed.

The third president, P. E. Svinhufvud (1931–37), was also a strong-willed man, who brought to his high office the prestige of one of the great heroes of the opposition during the time of Russian oppression and of the Prime Minister of the Cabinet which had published the Declaration of Independence. He also needed all these assets in restricting the anti-Communist movements and the unrest caused by the Depression, as well as in bloodlessly putting down the fascist-like uprising of 1932. Indeed, when in the autumn of 1936 he rejected the formation of a majority government, in which the large Social-Democratic Party would also have been represented, he was not elected for a second term. Thus discriminated against, the Social-Democratic Party succeeded in preventing the renewal of his mandate.

Under the difficult conditions of the war, two men were in practice responsible for the leadership of the country in a way which has reminded some of a double monarchy: Risto Ryti first as Prime Minister and later as President, and Marshal Mannerheim as Commander-in-Chief. The former, together with other men in leading positions, suffered, in response to the demand of the victorious allies, severe punishment in the post-war trials for their acts in leading Finland into war, while the latter was given the difficult task, demanding prestige and skill, of leading the country as President from war to peace.

The awkward job of the Presidents since the war has been above all to stabilize the new foreign policy orientation of the country, and to gain the confidence of the Soviet Union in its permanence and firmness. This was not an easy task from the point of view of internal politics either, particularly in the beginning, though approached with the prestige of J. K. Paasikivi (1946–1956). Urho Kekkonen (1956–) in his turn, has had to use all his skill and resolution also in the area of internal politics to achieve his present authority.

I have already mentioned that the other significant factor contributing to the strength of the President appears to have been the weakness of the parliamentary Cabinets. During the period of independence we have had about fifty Cabinets, the average life-span of which has been about one year. Only a little over half of these Cabinets has had the support of a coalition of the majority parties in Parliament, and these coalitions themselves have been fairly loose. The rest have been mostly minority Cabinets or even temporary civil servant or expert Cabinets. There have been six temporary Cabinets of civil servants or experts formed without consultation with the parties and their members have been mainly civil servants or other men not directly involved in party politics. Even the majority Cabinets have often been loose, and therefore almost constantly apt to dissolve under the pressure of their own internal disagreements.²

In these circumstances, the Prime Minister has hardly ever been able to rise to real leadership; he has had to concentrate his attention mainly on reconciling the internal differences of his Cabinet or on sailing with the shifting winds of Parliament. The President has played

a considerable role in steering the political basis of the new Cabinet and in choosing the candidates for Prime Minister, sometimes even in setting up the composition of the Cabinet, particularly in appointing the Foreign Minister.

These phenomena can in turn be accounted for by party conditions. There have practically always been at least half a dozen parties in Parliament, in addition to the frequent presence of some very small parties. Since independence, no party has achieved a majority in Parliament. Even more harmful has been the sharp opposition of the left, stemming from the Civil War, during the first couple of decades, and the even sharper antagonism, continuing down to the last years, between the two parties of the left wing, the Social Democrats and the Communists. Almost half of the seats in Parliament have generally been divided between these two parties. Since the war the Social Democrats have had only a slight edge over the Communists, but during the twenties the latter had only about 10 % of the seats in Parliament and in the thirties the Communist Party was banned altogether.

Of the bourgeois parties, the most important is the Agrarian, or as it is known today, the Center Party, both on account of its size (almost 25 % of the seats) and its position in the political field. The conservative Coalition Party (10–15 %) and the Progressive or Liberal Party (which has since dwindled considerably) have played a role in government politics, particularly during the first two decades of independence. The small Swedish Party, based on language interests – whose number of seats has gradually declined from a little over 10 % to somewhat more than 5 % – has occasionally been of importance, on account of its flexibility, as a balancing factor in the tension between the various Finnish parties.

Already toward the end of the authoritarian Grand Duchy-period small seeds of parliamentarism were observable, but they did not have an opportunity to grow; during the last decade of the period they were completely suffocated by the stifling Czarist bureaucracy and oppression. When parliamentarism was then suddenly legislated into existence by constitutional changes in 1917, it was no wonder that parties and politicians were not at first able to function in terms of the new system or to assume the responsibilities deriving from it. For example, it even happened that no party was willing to take the responsibility for governing preceding the 1922 elections, so that the President was forced to set up a temporary Cabinet of civil servants. The same procedure was used by the President a couple of years later, when he considered it necessary, despite the opposition of the parliamentary government, to dissolve Parliament in order to break out of the blind alley brought about by the imprisonment of the Communist representatives. But even during the last two decades the President has resorted to this procedure when the conflicts between the parties have made the formation of a regular cabinet difficult; the composition of these expert Cabinets has perhaps been now more colored by party politics or by the labor market organizations than was the case during the twenties.

With Cabinets like these, or otherwise politically weak ones, the President has not had much difficulty in putting through his wishes, though they might differ from those of the Cabinet. On the other hand, the President has not hesitated to make decisions deviating from the viewpoint even of a majority Cabinet, although the consequence might be a government crisis. This happened in 1932 when Svinhufvud refused to introduce in Parliament a proposition concerning regulation of interest rates. Again, in 1941 Ryti decided to introduce in Parliament a proposition of changes in the emergency resettlement law which deviated from the opinion of the Cabinet on politically important points. Nevertheless, because of the tense political situation in foreign policy, it was not possible to let the Cabinet resign and even the Minister in question was obliged to countersign the bill. Parliament, however, later changed the point in question to agree with the stand of the majority of the Cabinet, and as such the President finally approved it. The most recent such case occurred on February 21, 1969, when the President decided to introduce in Parliament a politically important bill concerning the election of the parliament in a form differing from the opinion of a Cabinet majority on essential points.

Most often, however, the President's decisions, when they differed from those of the Cabinet, have concerned matters of little or no political significance. And in fact all Finnish presidents have made such decisions to some extent. Even the first President, K. J. Ståhlberg, who made a conscious effort to observe the parliamentary rules of the game, is known to have made well over ten such decisions. Many of them seem to have been based on legal points.³ Quite often the decisions made by the President which have differed from the opinion of the Cabinet have concerned official appointments. This was done most often by Paasikivi, whose guiding principle in making appointments was that of seniority, which had been dominant in his own youth but had since become less important. Towards the end of his period in office his Cabinets adapted themselves formally to this fact and tried to put forth candidates for office whom they knew to have the support of the President.

Certain traditional circumstances, after a fashion also legalistic, have helped to emphasize and bring into public notice differences of opinion between the President and the members of the Cabinet, as well as the differences among the Cabinet members themselves. First of all, both in presenting issues to the President and also at the meetings of the Cabinet presided over by the Prime Minister, a record is kept of all the different positions expressed. This is a public document available to anyone for inspection.

In Cabinet meetings, presided over by the Prime Minister, issues are discussed in the usual way and eventual differences of opinion are resolved by voting. In presenting issues to the President, on the other hand, the procedure is not collegial, so there is no voting. The final decision is made by the President alone. On these occasions the Ministers merely express their opinion as possible guidance to the President. Ministers who are silent are according to the presumption stipulated by the law assumed to be in agreement with the Minister making the proposal.

The Cabinet, however, defines its position also with regard to the matters presented to the President in a separate preliminary meeting under the leadership of the Prime Minister, and thus, if necessary, by voting. Particularly from earlier times the records can tell a great deal about numerous votes at Cabinet meetings and about disagreements even on the occasion of a presentation to the President.

The highest executive power is thus strongly dualistic in its formal procedures.

In most cases, however, possible differences of opinion between the President and the Cabinet are reconciled ahead of time, by means of informal discussions and negotiations; in some cases one side or the other modifies its stand on the issue. Nevertheless, there seem to be essential differences in the manner in which each president has managed these affairs. The recently published diaries of the second President, Lauri Kr. Relander (1925-1931) indicate that he used to show up quite often at the informal discussions of the Cabinet or at the meetings of its Committee on Foreign Affairs, and that he sometimes even arranged them himself. Even the official presentations to the President were then sometimes such that thoroughgoing deliberations on important issues were held. As for Kyösti Kallio (1937-1940), he is known to have been also as President a rather active telephone negotiator. During the war, Risto Ryti also held frequent informal discussions with at least the more important Cabinet Ministers.

Other presidents, on the other hand, seems to have operated in a rather different style. Naturally none of the presidents refused to discuss issues by telephone or in person with a minister who wished to do so; in important issues needing settlement they themselves could of course also initiate contact. But in other respects they seem to have withdrawn to the elevated heights of the Head of State. From there they have descended among their Ministers mainly in connection with official introductions, and decisions have then been made very quickly.⁴

It may be noted that the presentation of the issues to the President are in general rather formal occasions. The President makes his decisions quite rapidly, without actual discussion of the issues, on the basis of a list of agenda, memoranda and other documents which are

distributed to the participants beforehand. It is normal for the President to express his approval of the minister's presentation concerning routine issues without further ado, and to bang his gavel. But even when differences of opinion do occur, on important issues, the differing ministers usually present only a brief proposal of their own, without detailed argumentation, after which the President makes his decision. This final decision may differ in unexpected ways from all the proposals. Then a situation may arise which is both legally and politically difficult: should the disagreeing ministers afterwards have their opinion expressed in the record, and may they do so?

The answer to these questions may be significantly relevant to the problem of responsibility in both a legal (§ 43) and a political sense. From a practical point of view, the latter is obviously more important. The ways in which the President can use his decision-making power are strictly prescribed in such a way as to emphasize his legal power. There have even developed corresponding attitudes, that expressed differences of opinion, although written down in the record, are not sufficient to free the Cabinet from political responsibility: the only effective means may be resignation from office.

I myself have suggested the interpretation that a sharp refusal on the part of the Cabinet to bear political responsibility for the intended decision would be sufficient to prevent the President from making that decision in a meeting of the Cabinet; indeed this interpretation has not been accepted by other constitutional lawyers or political scientists. Nor has the making of a "Cabinet question" in this manner ever been attempted in practice. Only once – over the previously mentioned issue of the dissolution of Parliament in 1924 – has the Cabinet rejected responsibility for the President's intended decision by resigning in advance. But the Cabinet has never attempted to prevent the President from carrying out his intention by resigning during the official presentation to the President, much less afterwards; the above mentioned resignation to the Cabinet in 1932 was due to an attempt on the part of the President to prevent the Cabinet from introducing in Parliament a bill on interest regulation.

A consideration of the question of responsibility illuminates in an interesting way the position of the President and the nature of the Finnish political system in general. In keeping with the general parliamentary model, in Finland, too, responsibility is considered to be divided in such a way that the Cabinet is politically responsible for the actions of the President, whereas the latter is free of responsibility. For instance, in former days criticism of the President in Parliament was not allowed. Thus, in 1925, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Väinö Tanner, criticised certain actions of the President in his function as Commander-in-Chief in connection with the budget discussions in Parliament. The "responsible" Prime Minister then took the floor and answered the accusations, while Tanner was reminded in the official record by a note of the Speaker, who belonged to the same party, that "the President must not be criticised in Parliament".

Since then, however, conditions and opinions have both changed. During the present decade, in particular, Members of Parliament have sometimes sharply criticized the actions and politics of the President in connection with budget discussions and in other relevant contexts without receiving any comment from the Speaker or anyone else. This practice does, indeed, seem somewhat strange, considering that the President is not present at sessions of Parliament to defend himself. Presumably, in any case, the Speaker would probably refuse to put to the vote any resolution containing direct criticism of the President. It may also be mentioned that the President himself, in connection with his recent decision on the issue of the election law against the opinion of a Cabinet majority, gave afterwards on March 2 1969 a public account of the matter, wherein he stated that "criticism pertaining to the action of the Government should be directed towards me."

There are also other problems related to the political responsibility of the President. Parliament cannot request the President to account for his actions, much less – in the manner of the Weimar Constitution in Germany – bring about his removal from office, for

instance by popular vote. But possibly he may not be elected for a new term, as happened with Svinhufvud in 1937. Again, in the autumn of 1961 a broad election coalition, spanning three or four parties from the Social Democrats over the Agrarians to the parties on right, was set up to prevent the re-election of Kekkonen, but the attempt did not succeed. In fact, the whole attempt broke down over the Berlin crisis and the note from the Soviet Union resulting from it, in which military negotiations were proposed based on the Treaty of Friendship and Assistance. These negotiations were, however, averted.

In recent times presidential elections have tended increasingly towards institutionalizing the President's political responsibility. Some of the earlier election campaigns were already conducted more and more in terms of the candidates. When in the 1950 elections Kekkonen began an intensive personal campaign on his own behalf, including numerous speaking tours, the other candidates – and in the end the incumbent President himself – later had to join in this American-style election campaigning. In this case too, the President had to account to the voters for his actions and explain his political stand, both on speaking tours and in interviews and press conferences held before the whole nation on radio and television.

On the other hand, it is questionable whether the Cabinet can be held responsible for those presidential statements, often including important political commitments, which it has had no opportunity to examine ahead of time, and which, in this era of mass communications or upon presentations to representatives of foreign states either abroad or at home, may receive very wide diffusion and importance.

The President has also on occasion taken the initiative outside of Cabinet presentations, as for instance by setting up his own commission to study the development of higher education. On the basis of the report made by this commission, the President presented in a speech over radio and TV on April 14, 1965 a large-scale program, which was later approved by the Cabinet and by Parliament. This program had begun to be put into practice already long before the recent student uprisings in various parts of the world had become fashionable.

The personal contribution of the President is, however, most evident in the sphere of foreign policy. In personal contacts and negotiations with the leaders of foreign powers, the cooperation of the Cabinet is not always even technically possible. According to the traditional concept, the President while travelling abroad has no legal competence to make any formal decisions; the Prime Minister or some other member of the Cabinet acts for him in his absence.

Especially since the war, the President has acted as the leader of the new orientation in foreign policy, based on the Treaty of Friendship and Assistance with the Soviet Union; this orientation has decisively affected the whole political situation in Finland. In a way the Presidents have guaranteed the new trend, which is in fact called the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line. A possible parallel can perhaps be seen only in Svinhufvud's position as the safekeeper of the line of internal politics during the restless early thirties, although he was not personally particularly active. Precisely in foreign policy the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have remained to a great extent in the shadow of the President since the war, nor has his influence in internal affairs at least diminished during this period.

We see, then, that many factors have contributed to the particularly strong position of the President: traditional and in particular legal concepts and attitudes, together with the conditions of party politics, the demands set by various situations and personal characteristics. The extent and interaction of these factors, on the one hand diachronic and on the other hand structural, can probably be measured only with difficulty even by the modern methods of the social sciences. But how do these features and in particular their net result fit into the parliamentary system?

Undoubtedly there are features here which are difficult to reconcile with the normal parliamentary model. The fact that the President can make decisions contrary to the opinion of the Cabinet and that a Minister is considered obligated to countersign a decision of the President with which he does not agree, seems to point to a president-centered system. The

same is true of the situation concerning presidential political responsibility, which has begun to appear more and more clearly in recent times. On the other hand, what is perhaps the central mechanism of parliamentarism, the vote of non-confidence, has always functioned faultlessly. Thus when the temporary Cabinet of Experts, formed in the autumn of 1957 without negotiating either with the parties or with their parliamentary groups, received a non-confidence vote in April 1958, it immediately resigned. When the Communist Minister for Internal Affairs received a vote of non-confidence in May 1948 but did not resign, the President immediately dismissed him and appointed a new Minister to take his place. So far as is known, no President has ever even intended to appoint a so-called "Combat Cabinet" (*Kampfregerung*), familiar from the last days of the Weimar Republic, in order to use it and by dissolving Parliament put through a particular orientation.

Is there then reason in the case of Finland to speak of some kind of mixed system, in which presidential and parliamentary systems complement each other? This is hardly the case. The characteristics of parliamentarism, after all, control the normal course of events completely, nor has their dominance of principle been upset even in exceptional situations. The political system has flexibly adapted itself to the exigencies of a given situation, and only on rare occasions have there been any serious disruptions.

The modes of political thought are somewhat of the same nature as the articles of the constitution. There is an attempt to fit reality into them, or at least to interpret reality in such a way as to make this possible; if this does not succeed, they are both set aside. Thus in Finland in the 1920's we tried to follow the English model, according to which the opposition, after overthrowing the government by means of its vote of non-confidence, should have taken the responsibility for forming a new Cabinet. It was later realized that under our conditions and with our multi-party system, this formula does not work, and it was given up long ago. The same is now happening to the dogma which maintains that the Head of State is free of all political responsibility.

The significant role of the President makes the Finnish political system perhaps exceptionally complex. But then, modern political systems may be in general so very complicated as to make an even remotely exhaustive analysis of their structure an extremely difficult task. Therefore perhaps it is wise to be cautious in applying system models and typologies. Most of our presidents have been more than symbolic figure-heads; several of them have acted as highly significant integrating factors in political life. It is hard to say to what extent they, or some of them, have modified or added to the institutionalized features of the presidential role. Although some of them, perhaps especially Kekkonen and Svinhufvud, have gotten involved in serious conflicts with some parties, the Presidency is still an institution above the party system.

In spite of everything, one can hardly say that the President has noticeably affected the party institution, obviously the most dominant factor of the political system. The party system has perhaps undergone the greatest development in that the sharp opposition to the left has disappeared; now even the communists appear to have been accepted – I believe definitively – as qualified participants in the cabinet. This development, to which some presidents have certainly contributed, in my opinion has nevertheless been brought about mainly by other, deeper causes. This may in turn be reflected quite significantly in the position of both the President and the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, and in their mutual relations. Presumably the President will nevertheless continue to play a significant role in the Finnish political system.

Furthermore, it may be that the president's personal possibilities of using power have up to now been exaggerated. Professor Neustadt⁵ has shown, by means of thorough analysis of practical examples, what infinitely complicated and varied factors affect the ability even of the powerful President of the USA to actually carry through his will. A similar study of the use of power by the President of Finland is still waiting to be carried out.

Paavo Kastari
University of Helsinki

NOTES

¹ Georges Burdeau: *Une survivance: La Notion de Constitution, L'évolution du Droit public. Etudes offertes à Achille Mestre*, 1956, pp. 53-62.

² Cf. Klaus Törnudd's article in this volume of SPS, pp. 58-70.

³ Ståhlberg was so punctilious in his legalism that he could not bring himself to make a certain official appointment which he had himself proposed somewhat earlier as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Administrative Court. The Prime Minister, as the President's deputy, had to make the appointment. Since then, opinions have changed to such an extent that the President did not hesitate to appoint his own son to office.

⁴ There may of course also have been fortuitous reasons for the absence of Prime Minister Mauno Koivisto from the informal discussions of the Cabinet on March 8, 1969, while he was acting as President during the absence of Kekkonen abroad. At this meeting, the participation of Finland in the Nordek plan for a Scandinavian economic union was discussed, an issue in which Koivisto has been a leading figure in Finland. There may nevertheless also be institutional pressure affecting this situation, due to the law which since 1956 prohibits the President's deputy from acting at the same time as a Minister (§ 39).

⁵ Richard E. Neustadt: *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*, 1960.