

CHAPTER II.

The Canadian Constitution.—Subjects assigned to Federal Parliament and to Provincial Legislatures.—Senate and House of Commons.—Franchise.—Elections.—Standing Committees.—Local Legislatures.—Municipal Institutions.—Judiciary.—Unorganized Territory.—Genesis of Confederation.—List of Governors General since Confederation.—List of Members of Privy Council.

18. The system of government established in Canada under the Union Act of 1867 is a Federal Union (the first of the kind in the British Empire), having a general or central government, controlling all matters essential to the general development, the permanency and the unity of the whole Dominion, and a number of local or provincial governments having the control and management of certain matters naturally and conveniently falling within their defined jurisdiction, while each Government is administered in accordance with the British system of parliamentary institutions. By this Act the Imperial Parliament practically gave to the Dominion Parliament the largest possible rights which can be exercised by a dependency of legislation on all matters of importance to the Union generally.

The position that Canada consequently occupies is that of a semi-independent power. The powers vested in the Parliament of Canada are set forth in the 91st section of the Confederation Act, which provides that the Queen, with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons, may “make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada in relation to all matters not coming within the classes of subjects by this Act assigned exclusively to the Legislatures of the Provinces” ; and for greater certainty it is declared that “the executive legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada extends to all matters coming within the classes of subjects next hereinafter mentioned,” that is to say:—

1. The public debt and property.
2. The regulation of trade and commerce.
3. The raising of money by any mode or system of taxation.
4. The borrowing of money on the public credit.
5. Postal service.
6. The census and statistics.
7. Militia, military and naval service and defence.
8. The fixing of and providing for the salaries and allowances of civil and other officers of the Government of Canada.
9. Beacons, buoys, lighthouses and Sable Island.
10. Navigation and shipping.
11. Quarantine and the establishment and maintenance of marine hospitals.
12. Sea coast and inland fisheries.
13. Ferries between a province and any British or foreign country, or between two provinces.
14. Currency and coinage.
15. Banking, incorporation of banks and the issue of paper money.
16. Savings banks.