

Again, in the South African federation, also formed in a bilingual country where the white population of one province was almost altogether British, of another almost wholly Dutch, of the other two nearly equally divided, we find a strong federation where the powers of local governments are more restricted than in our own country. The decisive factor necessitating the formation of a strong, central Government seems to have been the presence in South Africa of a native population vastly outnumbering the whites.

Besides the Dominions above enumerated, the Irish Free State may now (1922) be said to possess full Dominion status, while the six counties of Northeast Ulster may also be regarded as a separate self-governing colony. The great Empire of India has internationally been accepted as a member of the League of Nations, and in its internal administration has been placed on the road, formerly traversed by the Dominions which are now fully self-governing, towards responsible government. Indeed, the whole evolution of the Empire, throughout all its parts which are more than mere fortresses like Gibraltar or trading stations like Hong Kong, is in the direction of responsible government, to be attained in the dependencies as it has been in what used to be called the colonies, by the gradual extension of self-government in proportion to the growing capacities of their respective populations. It is the recognized aim of British administrators, by the extension of educational facilities and by just administration, to develop these capacities to the utmost, so that in the dependencies, as well as in the Dominions and in the Mother Country, the constitutional history of the future may be a record of "freedom slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent."

It is the purpose of this article to relate as briefly as possible, the process of this development of free government in the Dominion of Canada.

The French Régime.—The settlement of Canada commenced at a time when the extension of European trade and commerce throughout the world was being mainly carried on by Chartered Companies of merchants belonging to various nations, more particularly England, France and Holland. These Companies each tried to monopolize the trade of the regions in which they established themselves, receiving from their sovereign charters which, theoretically at least, gave them a monopoly so far as their compatriots were concerned, while against foreign competition they maintained their position with the sword, even when their respective mother countries, thousands of miles and months of time distant, were at peace. Among such companies of this period were the English and Dutch East India Companies, the Guinea Company, the Russia Company, the Virginia Company, and a little later, the Hudson's Bay Company. Similarly we find in the earliest stage of French enterprise in Canada that several short-lived companies successively possessed a monopoly of trade and employed such men as Champlain as governors and explorers of the opportunities of the new territories. The charters