

of foreign countries have characterized this phase in the growth of the Dominion of Canada. More explicit recognition of the implications of the principles of equality of status was accorded in the Statute of Westminster of 1931, which provided for the removal of the remaining limitations on the legislative autonomy of the Dominions.

PART I.—THE CONSTITUTION AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

The Dominion of Canada is the largest in area and the most populous of the great self-governing Dominions of the British Empire, which also include the Commonwealth of Australia, the Union of South Africa, the Dominion of New Zealand, Southern Rhodesia and the island colony of Newfoundland (with Labrador). Because of the inability of the Government of Newfoundland to meet the interest charges upon its obligations, the constitution of that colony was suspended in 1934 on the petition of the Legislature. The island is now administered by six Commissioners appointed by the Crown, three from Newfoundland and three from the United Kingdom. For the present there is no Legislative Council and no House of Assembly. These Dominions enjoy responsible government of the British type, administered by Executive Councils (or Cabinets) acting as advisers to the representative of the Sovereign, themselves responsible to and possessing the confidence of the representatives elected to Parliament by the people, and giving place to other persons more acceptable to Parliament whenever that confidence is shown to have ceased to exist.

Of these Dominions, Canada, Australia and South Africa extend over enormous areas of territory, the first two approximating Europe in area. Each section has its own problems and its own point of view, so that local Parliaments for each section, as well as the central Parliament for the whole country, are required. The local Parliaments, established when transportation and communications were more difficult and expensive than at present, were chronologically prior to the central body, to which on its formation they either resigned certain powers, as in the case of Australia, or surrendered all their powers with certain specified exceptions, as in Canada and South Africa. Of such local Parliaments, Canada at the present time has nine, Australia six and South Africa four.

Besides the Dominions above enumerated, the great Empire of India in its internal administration has been placed on the road, formerly traversed by the Dominions that are now fully self-governing, towards responsible government. Indeed, the whole evolution of the Empire, throughout all parts that are more than mere fortresses or trading stations, 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 has been and is the recognized aim of British administrators, by the extension of educational facilities and by just administration, to develop these capacities to the utmost.

Section 1.—The Evolution of the Constitution of Canada Down to Confederation

The process of the development of free government in the Dominion of Canada down to Confederation is given in an article appearing at pp. 34-40 of the 1942 Year Book. Also in an Appendix to that article, pp. 40-60, the text of the British North America Act is presented.