

## Section 2.—Development of the Constitution Since Confederation

As stated at p. 61 of the 1942 Canada Year Book, it was the intention to publish in the 1943 edition of the Year Book a companion article to that which appeared at pp. 34-60 of the 1942 edition, and which would deal with constitutional developments since Confederation. On grounds of economy, a 1943 edition of the Year Book was not published and, in consequence, the present edition has to include a vast quantity of data concerning economic developments over two important years when change has been extraordinarily rapid. Pressure on space is so great that some modification of the original plan is necessary.

Under the caption "Evolution of the National Constitution Since Confederation", the 1922-23 Year Book deals at pp. 94-100 with the development of Canada's position in the British Commonwealth of Nations to that date. Space has been saved by carrying the material forward from that date rather than by recasting the original article. Major constitutional developments have taken place in the past two decades and, by restricting the present article mainly to these features, it has been possible to give the facts in greater detail.

However, in order to make the earlier material available to interested readers, the previously published articles dealing with the evolution of the Constitution have been reprinted and a copy may be obtained free of charge by purchasers of the 1943-44 Year Book on application to the Dominion Statistician.

### CANADA'S PRESENT STATUS IN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS\*

The period covered by this article may be regarded, for convenience, as commencing with Canada's participation, in 1920, in the first meeting of the League of Nations Assembly, to full membership in which the Dominions had been admitted in 1919. For that momentous step the way had been paved by the adoption at the Imperial War Conference of 1917, of Resolution IX, a conspicuous milestone on the way to nationhood of the Dominions. Forcefully advocated by the Prime Ministers of Canada and South Africa, and unanimously endorsed by the Conference, Resolution IX read as follows:—

"The Imperial War Conference are of opinion that the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the component parts of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the War, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities.

"They deem it their duty, however, to place on record their view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control, of domestic affairs, should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important portion of the same, should recognize the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations, and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action, founded on consultation, as the several Governments may determine."

Facilities for such consultation were readily available in the establishment of the Imperial War Cabinet to which the Prime Minister of each Dominion was accorded the right to nominate a Cabinet Minister to represent him, each Prime Minister having also the right to communicate directly with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom as occasion might require.

Just before the Armistice that terminated the War of 1914-18, the Canadian Prime Minister, on Oct. 29, 1918, raised the question of the Dominions' participation in the Peace Conference. Much opposition had to be overcome in many quarters, but finally adequate representation in the British Empire Delegation was conceded and with the forceful but silent testimony of the Dominions' part in the winning

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