

In their practical operation, however, they constituted a full parliamentary democracy on the British model. The Governor's position was akin to that of the King, whom he represented. The executive business was carried on by a Cabinet formed from the party having and retaining a majority in the elected Assembly. The Cabinet when meeting to form policy was a Committee of the Executive Council under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The Council, meeting for the formal exercise of its powers, chiefly to approve minutes of the Committee, was presided over by the Governor acting as the Governor in Council.

The Assembly remained the elected House. The electoral franchise extended to men at twenty-one years of age and women at twenty-five, provided they were British subjects of at least two years residence. The Legislative Council remained a body appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Cabinet.

Generally speaking, all bills required the approval of both Houses before receiving the Governor's assent, although in certain cases the Council could not bar the passage of a measure from the Assembly. The rules of procedure of the two Houses were based upon those of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

The adoption of the recommendations of the Royal Commission entailed the suspension of the constitution of 1855\* and the institution of Government by Commission. By Letters Patent based upon the Newfoundland Act, 1933, of the United Kingdom Parliament, Newfoundland was to be governed by a Governor and six Commissioners appointed by the Crown, three from Newfoundland and three from the United Kingdom. The Governor was both the King's representative and the chairman of the Commission. The Commission had both executive and legislative powers. Bills were published before enactment; otherwise the popular will was not ascertained by any constitutional procedure. The proceedings of the Commission were subject to supervisory control by the United Kingdom Government and the Governor-in-Commission was responsible to the Dominions Office for good government. Responsible government would be restored on request from the people of Newfoundland as soon as the country was self-supporting again.

This sudden intrusion of autocracy into Newfoundland after generations of responsible self-government may be summed up as an administrative expedient designed to meet a critical condition of the times. Its effect upon the constitutional status of Newfoundland seems ambiguous. The Statute of Westminster was never amended to exclude Newfoundland from the provisions applicable to it at the time of enactment. Thus, Newfoundland became a 'Dominion' with suspended status. This form of government remained until Mar. 31, 1949, when Newfoundland became united with Canada as a Province.

On two occasions previous to 1948, Newfoundland entered into negotiations with a view to joining the Canadian Confederation. In 1869 a pro-confederation movement ended with the defeat of the government that favoured the measure. Another attempt ended when a delegation sent to Ottawa in 1895 failed to secure agreement on financial terms. Fifty years later the future government of Newfoundland became an issue and in a national referendum held in 1948 a majority

\* As set forth subsequently in Letters Patent of 1876, amended by Letters Patent in 1905.