

electoral districts, elections, Royal Style and Titles, and also statutes of provincial legislatures relating to provincial government and provincial legislative assemblies. Other written instruments, such as the Royal Proclamation of 1763, early instructions to Governors, letters patent creating the offices of Governors and Governors General, and Orders in Council passed pursuant to the British North America Act, also form part of the Canadian constitutional system. In addition, the Constitution of Canada includes well-established usages and conventions. The preamble to the British North America Act states that it was the desire of the original provinces to be united "with a constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom" and accordingly many of the usages and conventions of government that have been developed in the United Kingdom over the centuries are followed in Canada. For example, the Cabinet system of responsible government as developed in the United Kingdom obtains in Canada although no mention thereof is made in the British North America Act.

No provision was made in the British North America Act, 1867, for amendment thereof by any legislative authority in Canada, but both the Parliament of Canada and the provincial legislatures were given legislative jurisdiction with respect to some matters relating to government. Thus, for example, the Parliament of Canada was given jurisdiction with respect to the establishment of electoral districts and election laws, and the privileges and immunities of members of the House of Commons and the Senate, and each provincial legislature was empowered to amend the constitution of the province except as regards the office of Lieutenant-Governor. By an amendment to the British North America Act passed in 1949, the authority of the Parliament of Canada to legislate with respect to constitutional matters was considerably enlarged, and it may now amend the Constitution of Canada except as regards the legislative authority of the provinces, the rights and privileges of provincial legislatures or governments, schools, the use of the English or French language, and the duration of the House of Commons.

Canada's Status in the Commonwealth of Nations.*—The several stages in the development of the status of Canada have been authoritatively described in the reports of successive Imperial Conferences, including that held at London in 1926 which defined the group of self-governing communities consisting of the United Kingdom and the Dominions as "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". That Conference also recognized that, as a consequence of this equality of status, the Governor General of a Dominion "is the representative of the Crown, holding in all essential respects the same position in relation to the administration of public affairs in the Dominion as is held by His Majesty the King in Great Britain", and that "it is the right of the Government of each Dominion to advise the Crown in all matters relating to its own affairs". Simultaneously, with this change in the constitutional relationship between the several parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations, there developed, as a complementary aspect of nationhood, the assumption by the several Dominions of further responsibilities and rights of sovereign States in their relations with other members of the community of nations. Membership in the League of Nations and, more recently, in the United Nations, the exercise of treaty-making powers and the establishment of separate

* Dealt with in greater detail in the 1952-53 Year Book, pp. 101-104.