

CHAPTER II.—CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT

CONSPECTUS

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The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.

PART I.—CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

The Canadian federal state, which today comprises ten provinces and two vast northern territories, had its beginning ninety-four years ago in the enactment (Mar. 29, 1867) by the Parliament of the United Kingdom of the British North America Act, 1867. Fashioned largely out of the Seventy-two Resolutions drafted at Quebec (1864) by the Fathers of Confederation, the British North America Act, 1867 provided for the federal union of the three British North American provinces (Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) in one Dominion under the name of "Canada".

While the new nation that came into being on July 1, 1867 was a federation comprised of four provinces, namely, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, Sect. 146 of the Act provided for the admission into the Union of the Crown colonies of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland on the Atlantic and the united (1866) island and mainland colony of British Columbia on the Pacific, and also of the vast expanse of Hudson's Bay Company territory in the North West known as "Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory". Following the negotiation of an agreement on terms comprising the Company's surrender of its authority and territories to the Crown (which was to transfer them at once to Canada) and the retention of one-twentieth of the land of the fertile belt (the southern territories) with designated blocks of land around its trading posts and a Canadian cash payment of £300,000, the new nation of Canada was ready to expand westward with unmatched momentum across the Continent to the Pacific.