

## Political evolution of Canada



In matters of specific concern to the provinces, it is Canadian government policy to assist them in achieving their particular aspirations and goals, as illustrated by the “entente” signed by Quebec and France in the field of education in February 1965. Provincial and federal authorities co-operated in a procedure that enabled Quebec, within the framework of the constitution and national policy, to participate in international arrangements. Once it is determined that what a province wishes to achieve in the field of provincial jurisdiction falls within the framework of Canadian foreign policy, the provinces may discuss arrangements with the authorities of the country concerned. For a formal international agreement the federal signature of treaties and conduct of overall foreign policy must come into operation.

## Distribution of federal and provincial powers

2.2

Since the purpose of the BNA Act was to create a federal system of government, important provisions of that document deal with the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. Each level of government is virtually sovereign with respect to the powers it exercises. While the federal government under the BNA Act has the power to disallow provincial legislation, this power has not been exercised in recent years.

Section 91 of the BNA Act gives the Parliament of Canada a general power to “make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada” and lists classes of subjects over which Parliament has exclusive authority which illustrate but do not restrict the general power. The list contains 31 classes of federal powers such as regulation of trade and commerce, defence, currency, raising money by any mode or system of taxation, postal services, navigation and shipping, weights and measures and