OVERVIEW

Canada is a parliamentary democracy, a constitutional monarchy. It is a federal state with 10 provinces and two territories and, since the "patriation" of the constitution in 1982, is now fully responsible for its own constitution and any further constitutional change.

The monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, is represented in Canada by a resident appointed Governor General, now traditionally a Canadian. The prime minister is the political party leader who has the support of the majority of candidates elected to the House of Commons and he selects the cabinet (that is, the ministry). The Senate has 104 senators appointed to represent Canada regionally. The House of Commons has 282 members of Parliament elected in districts based on census population counts. In federal elections all Canadians over 18 years old can vote.

Administration of legislation and of government policies is carried out by a non-partisan public service.

Provincial governments follow a version similar to the federal pattern.