

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

and following the date of the Union,—men of great attainments and strong character, who had shared largely in the preparation of the public mind for the proposed union and had done much to shape its form,—do not at the present time fill so large a space in the public memory as they will in history when the full account of Confederation is written.

Federal Union.—Previous to 1861 many suggestions for the union of the North American provinces had been put forward, but the first legislative action looking to this end was taken by the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia in 1861 under the leadership of the Hon. Charles Tupper, then a member of that body and Provincial Secretary of the Province.

Early in 1864 delegates from the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island assembled in Charlottetown, authorized by their respective governments to confer in reference to a union of these provinces. Nothing, however, on this line was at that time accomplished, except that as a result of certain conferences, another convention was called by the Governor-General to meet at Quebec on October 10, 1864, in which Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces were all represented. Seventy-two resolutions, afterwards formulated as the British North America Act, 1867, were adopted by this convention, and these were subsequently presented to the respective legislatures for concurrence. The Canadian Parliament in March of the following year adopted the resolutions,



VISCOUNT MONCK

but in the Maritime Provinces much opposition was shown to the scheme. In 1866, however, the province of New Brunswick, after a general election, also concurred in the resolutions. The Legislature of Nova Scotia adopted the measure without referring to the electorate. The Bill for the Union was presented for the first time in the Imperial Parliament in February, 1867, and passed the two Houses on March 29 in the same year. The Act, officially cited as "The British North America Act, 1867," came into force by proclamation on July 1 in that year. This date has since in each succeeding year been celebrated throughout Canada as a statutory holiday styled "Dominion Day." The

Right Hon. Charles Stanley, Viscount Monck, who at the time of the union was Governor of Canada, became the first Governor-General of the new Dominion.

Canada and the Federal System.—Under a federal system the constitution of a country includes not merely the framework of a federal arrangement, but the principle of the whole political constitution in its practical operations. It implies independent co-ordinate powers,