

The constitutions of the four provinces, viz., Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which composed the Dominion in 1867 (when the Act of Confederation was passed), are the same in principle and details, except that Ontario and New Brunswick have only one chamber, a Legislative Assembly; the other two being bicameral. Of the provinces since created or admitted each has only one house, an elective Assembly.

In details the Dominion Parliament is closely copied.

The members of the Legislatures as well as the Members of Parliament are paid an indemnity for attendance.

Municipal institutions are general. In the complete form as adopted by Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia and other provinces, the whole municipal organization comprises (a.) The townships, being rural districts of an area of eight or ten square miles; (b.) Villages with a population over 750; (c.) Towns with a population of over 2,000. Such of these as are comprised within a large district, called a county, constitute (d) the county municipality; (e) Cities are established from the growth of towns when their population exceeds 15,000.

The townships and villages are administered by a reeve and councillors; the towns by a mayor and councillors, and the cities by a mayor and aldermen. The governing body of the county municipality is composed of the members elected by districts containing one or more townships or villages, the presiding officer being styled warden.

By the Act of Confederation it is provided that the Governor General in Council shall appoint the judges of the Superior, District and County Courts, the salaries, allowances and pensions for whom are fixed by the Dominion Parliament.

The highest court in Canada is known as the Supreme Court of Canada. It has an appellate, civil and criminal jurisdiction in and throughout Canada. It has also appellate jurisdiction in controverted election cases, and may examine and report upon any private bill or petition for the same. It has jurisdiction in case of controversies between the Dominion and the provinces, and between the provinces themselves on condition that the Legislatures pass Acts agreeing to such jurisdiction. Under Act of the Canadian Parliament passed in 1891, the Governor in Council may refer to the Supreme Court for an opinion upon any matter which he deems advisable in the public interest.

The court is presided over by a chief justice and five puisne judges. From its decision an appeal lies by leave to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of England, except in criminal cases; in these the judgment of the Supreme Court is final.

The Exchequer Court, presided over by a single judge, possesses exclusive original jurisdiction in all cases in which demand is made or relief sought in any suit or action of the Court of Exchequer, on its revenue side, against the Crown or any of its officers. This court also possesses original jurisdiction in all cases in which it is sought to enforce any law relating to the revenue. It is also a Colonial Court of Admiralty.