

The written part of Canada's constitution consists of statutes of the Imperial (that is, the United Kingdom) Parliament, the Parliament of Canada and the legislatures of the Canadian provinces. The major constitutional document is the British North America Act, 1867, later renamed the Constitution Act, 1867. This document is a statute of the United Kingdom Parliament. By this Act, the United Kingdom Parliament united three British colonies - Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick - into one Dominion under the name of Canada, and provided for executive, legislative and judicial organs of governance for the Dominion of Canada (we would now say 'the Federation', the 'Federal Government' or 'Canada'). The Act then created four Provinces in the same territory - Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick - and established executive, legislative and judicial organs of governance for these provinces. The Act endowed Canada and the provinces with legislative powers, which it divided between them. By the terms of the Constitution Act, 1867, the legislative powers conferred on the Federal Parliament are 'exclusive'; so, too, does the Act 'exclusively' confer legislative powers on the provinces. Because its powers are 'exclusive', Canada's legislative power acts as a limit on provincial legislative power, and vice versa. Canada's constitution limits governmental power in other ways, most notably by Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982 (the 'Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms') which guarantees certain rights to individuals and groups; by Part II of the Constitution Act, 1982 and certain other constitutional statutes and rules of the common law which reserve rights and powers to Aboriginal persons and groups, and by other constitutional statutes which reserve further rights and powers to individuals and groups. These reservations require government power to refrain from acting in ways that impinge unduly on these rights, or require government power to be exercised in prescribed ways: equally, for example, or again, bilingually.

### KEY CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Royal Proclamation of 1763
- Quebec Act, 1774
- Constitution Act, 1867
- Statute of Westminster, 1931
- Constitution Act, 1982

### OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

- London Resolutions, 1866
- Manitoba Act, 1870
- British Columbia Terms of Union
- Constitution Act, 1866
- Constitution Act, 1871
- P.E.I. Terms of Union
- Alberta Act, 1905
- Saskatchewan Act, 1905
- Constitution Act, 1915
- Constitution Act, 1930

- Constitution Act, 1940
  - Constitutional Amendments Act
  - Every Single Constitutional Document Known to Canadian History
  - Constitutional Documents of Newfoundland and Labrador
- PROPOSALS FOR  
CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

- The Victoria Charter (1971)
- The Meech Lake Accord (1987)
- Consensus Report on the Constitution (Charlottetown Accord)
- Calgary Declaration (1997)