



By the *Constitution Act, 1867*, "the executive government of and over Canada is declared to continue and be vested in the Queen." She acts, ordinarily through the governor general, whom she appoints, on the advice of the Canadian prime minister. The governor general normally holds office for five years, though the tenure may be extended for a year or so.

Parliament consists of the Queen, the Senate and the House of Commons.

The Queen

The Queen is the formal head of the Canadian state. She is represented federally by the governor general, provincially by the lieutenant-governors. Federal acts begin: "Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons, enacts as follows"; acts in most provinces begin with similar words. Parliament (or the provincial legislature) meets only at the royal summons: no House of Parliament (or legislature) is equipped with a self-starter. No bill, federal or provincial becomes law without royal assent. The monarch has, on occasion, given the assent personally to federal acts but ordinarily the assent is given by the governor general or a deputy, and to provincial acts by the lieutenant-governor or an administrator.

The governor general and the lieutenant-governors have the right to be consulted by their ministers, and the right to encourage or warn them. But they almost invariably must act on their ministers' advice, though there may be very rare occasions when they must, or may, act without advice or even against the advice of the ministers in office.

The Senate

The Senate has 104 members: 24 from the Maritime provinces (ten from Nova Scotia, ten from New Brunswick, four from Prince Edward Island); 24 from Quebec; 24 from Ontario; 24 from the Western provinces (six each from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia); six from Newfoundland; and one each from the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. There is provision also for four or eight extra senators, one — or two — from the Maritime provinces, from Quebec, from Ontario and from the West; but this has never been used.