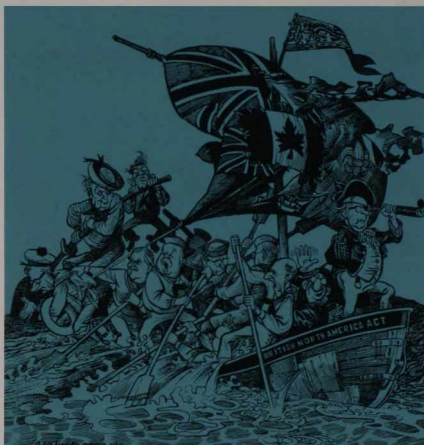


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The federal government therefore received all the great powers — such as regulation of trade and commerce, defence, the raising of money by any method of taxation, banking, interprovincial transportation, shipping, the fisheries — as well as all powers not specifically granted to the provinces. In contrast to the United States where residual powers rest with the states, the provinces were given strictly limited powers over what then seemed to be relatively minor matters such as education, property and civil rights, and municipal institutions.

Clearly the central government was to be the predominant power among the operating governments in Canada. But if this was the intention of the Fathers, it has been frustrated. In the century since 1867, a series of court decisions has done much to alter the constitution. The courts have repeatedly reached decisions which have favoured the provinces and limited the federal government's powers. More important, such functions of government as education, social welfare, and housing and highways, which lie within the powers of the provinces, have assumed far greater importance than anyone dreamed of in



1867. As a result, the provinces have become more powerful and more important in the lives of Canadians than anyone imagined in 1867.

At the same time, however, provincial incomes have not increased as much as provincial responsibilities. Today some provinces are desperately short of money to carry out their work. The federal government gives them millions each year and assists them with many programmes. Yet the hard-pressed provinces constantly demand more. By the 1960's it was clear that a major overhaul of the federal system was necessary if government in Canada was to continue to work effectively. This overhaul was made even more urgent because the French-speaking province of Quebec was demanding vastly increased powers and revenues as the price of remaining within the country. Thus began in 1968, an ongoing Constitutional Conference of federal and provincial premiers. There have been seven meetings of the Conference to review the Canadian constitution (the British North America Act) with the aim of revising it to accord with social and political changes since 1867 (see VOL. II, ISSUE TWO). The most recent meeting was in June of last year in Victoria, British Columbia.

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