

agreed on a popularly elected Lower House and a system of equal representation in an Upper House. It adjourned to Halifax and Saint John and finally postponed further deliberations until a conference of all the British North American colonies could be arranged to meet at Quebec in the following month.

The Quebec convention assembled on October 10 and adjourned on October 28, 1864. Its actual working time did not exceed fourteen days and its sessions were held behind closed doors. Thirty-two members made up this constitutional convention which was the first of its kind in the British Empire. The results of the Quebec conference were incorporated in seventy-two resolutions which became the basis of the British North America Act of 1867. The delegates to the Conference promised to get their respective legislatures to ratify the resolutions. The resolutions recommended a federal union of all British North American colonies under the British Crown. They provided for a federal government and for provincial governments in each of the provinces, and they enumerated the powers and duties of the federal and the provincial legislatures, leaving all the undefined residue or "reserved powers" to the federal government. The battle for ratification began when the seventy-two resolutions of the Quebec Convention were submitted, en bloc, to the respective legislatures. All the colonies accepted them except Prince Edward Island which joined in 1873, and Newfoundland, which completed the union in 1949.

Federation could not have been accomplished had not responsible government already been a reality. This had been achieved in all of British North America except British Columbia by 1863. The Canadian confederation is peculiar in that it is the only case on record up to that time, in which a group of colonies re-made their own constitution in a peaceful manner.

After the ratification by the provinces concerned, the British North America Act was passed on March 29, 1867, by the British Parliament. It was substantially unchanged from the proposals presented by the Canadian delegates. The royal proclamation fixing July 1 as Canada's official birthday, followed immediately the passing of the act.

Since confederation there has taken place a steady development of the powers of the Canadian nation. The change in the status of the Dominion was evident at the successive Colonial Conferences, the name of which was changed in 1907 to Imperial Conferences. At the close of the First Great War, on the initiative of Sir Robert Borden, then Prime Minister of Canada, the Dominions secured recognition as signatory powers of the Treaty of Versailles and were accepted as members of the League of Nations. The present position of Canada in the Commonwealth of Nations was clearly defined at the Imperial Conference of 1926. The report of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee defined the relative position of Great Britain and the self governing Dominions. The committee made the following statement which was endorsed at the conference:-

"They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

The Statute of Westminster, an Imperial Act which was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1931, recapitulated the principles declared at the Imperial Conference of 1926.