

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 provinces accepted them except Prince Edward Island who joined some years later.

Federation could not have been accomplished had not responsible government already been a reality in British North America. Responsible government had been achieved in all of British North America except British Columbia by 1863. The Canadian confederation is peculiar in one regard. It is the only case on record to that time in which a group of colonies practically remade their own constitution in a peaceful way.

After the ratification by the provinces concerned, the British North America Act was passed on 29 March, 1867 by the British Parliament. It was substantially unchanged from the proposals presented by the Canadian delegates. The royal proclamation fixing 1st of July 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 development 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 British Commonwealth of Nations was clearly defined at the Imperial Conference of 1926, attended by Prime Minister King and the late Justice Minister Lapointe. 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.

Thus to-day the evolution is completed. The nation born in 1867 stands within the British Commonwealth as a sovereign state.