

In 1848, a Constituent Assembly, consisting of 880 members, was elected by universal suffrage in France for the purpose of drawing up a new constitution. 7,835,327 electors, or 84 per cent of the population, voted. The assembly opened on the 4th of May and was only through with its constitution on the 4th of November.

When in 1787 the United States agreed to consider a change of constitution, each state, with the exception of Rhode Island, sent delegates who assembled at Philadelphia on May 14. The convention consisted of fifty delegates, and the population of the thirteen states was then 3,500,000 people, i.e., about the population of Ontario to-day. George Ticknor Curtis, commenting on this convention in "The Constitution of the United States and its History," says:—

This body of men, assembled for the unprecedented purpose of thoroughly reforming the system of government with the authority of the national will, comprised a representation of the chief ability, moral and intellectual, of the country; and in the great task assigned to them they exhibited a wisdom, a courage and a capacity which had been surpassed by no similar body of law givers ever previously assembled. The world had then seen little of real⁴liberty united with personal safety and public security; and it was an entirely novel undertaking to form a complete system of government, wholly independent of tradition, exactly defined in a written constitution, to be created at once, and at once set in motion, for the accomplishment of the great objects of human liberty and social progress. Their chief source of wisdom was necessarily to be found in seeking to avoid the errors which experience had shown to exist in the Articles of Confederation. Naturally, the individual members of the convention were men of widely different views; the debates extended over four months' time; but the counsels of the leading spirits at last prevailed—of such men as Hamilton, Madison, Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, Edmund Randolph and Rufus King. Washington was the presiding officer.

There were 1,200 delegates in the Constituent Assembly of France when its population was 24,800,000 and 880 when it was 35,400,000. There were fifty delegates at the Philadelphia convention when the population of the United States was one-third of Canada's present population. Considering, therefore, the vastness of our country, the conditions in the west and in the east, and our bi-lingual character, we would make no mistake if we formed a constituent assembly of 223 delegates.

The number of members representing the Dominion and each province would be equal to one-fourth of the membership in the Senate, the House of Commons and in the legislatures, including the Quebec Legislative Council, which membership is now as follows:

Senate	96
House of Commons	245
Alberta	63
British Columbia	48
Manitoba	55
New Brunswick	48
Nova Scotia	30
Ontario	90
Prince Edward Island	30
Quebec Legislative Council	24
Quebec Legislature	90
Saskatchewan	63
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Total	882