

tion of such difficulties as are likely to arise from time to time in the working of the federal system. Here again the authors of federation have availed themselves of the experience of their American neighbors, and have established a Supreme Court or general Court of Appeal for Canada, whose highest function is to decide these questions of jurisdiction. The decisions of this court are already doing much to solve difficulties that impede the successful operation of the constitution. As a rule, cases come before the Supreme Court on appeal from the lower courts, but the law regulating its powers provides that the Governor in Council may refer any matter to this court on which a question of constitutional jurisdiction has been raised. But the Supreme Court of Canada is not the court of last resort for Canada. The people have an inherent right, as subjects of the Queen, to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom. Several cases, involving constitutional issues of great moment, have already come before that learned body, and on more than one occasion the decisions of the Supreme Court have been reversed, though the general result so far has been to strengthen confidence in the Canadian tribunal.

But it is not only by means of the courts that a check is imposed upon hasty or unconstitutional legislation. The constitution provides that the Governor-General may veto or reserve any bill passed by the two houses of parliament when it conflicts with imperial interests or imperial legislation. The veto, however, has never been exercised in the history of Canada, but it was until recently the practice to reserve for Her Majesty's assent such bills as appeared to fall within certain classes of subjects expressly set forth in the royal instructions to the Governor-General. Since confederation, however, the imperial government has materially modified these instructions, because it has been deemed "inadvisable that they should contain anything which could be interpreted as limiting or defining the legislative powers conferred in 1867 on the Dominion Parliament."

It is now understood that the reserved power of disallowance which Her Majesty's government possesses under the law is sufficient to meet all possible cases. This sovereign power is never exercised except in the case of an act clearly in conflict with an imperial statute or in violation of a treaty affecting a foreign nation. In the provinces the Lieutenant-Governors may also veto bills of the legislature, or reserve them for the consideration of the Governor-General in Council. It is noteworthy that during the first years of union in the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, the Lieutenant-Governors sometimes withheld their assent, — a power not exercised by the Crown in England since the days of Queen Anne. In this