

The British North America Act of 1867 was Canada's first constitution. It was passed by the British Parliament on March 29, 1867, and became effective on July 1, 1867. This Act (or Law) defined who made laws and decisions in the country and how these decisions were made. All laws and authority were subject to the approval of the British monarchy (royal power).

Modelled on the British system of Parliament, the Canadian government is defined in the BNA Act as having two parts: an appointed Upper House (Senate) and an elected House of Commons. The BNA Act also defined the power and responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments.

The following articles are cited directly from the BNA Act.

*Canada shall be divided into Four Provinces, named Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.*

*The Executive Government and Authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen.*

*Until the Queen otherwise directs, the Seat of Government of Canada shall be Ottawa.*

*There shall be One Parliament for Canada, consisting of the Queen, an Upper House styled the Senate, and the House of Commons.*

*It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons, to make Laws for the Peace, Order and good Government of Canada.*

