



The British North America Act (BNA Act) explained how the new Canadian government would work as a result of Confederation. The new system was based on the model of the British Parliamentary system. The BNA Act, later called the Constitution Act, was the basic law outlining government in Canada, with some changes made by Parliament over the years, until a new Canadian Constitution was signed in 1982.

Because the colonies had agreed to a federal system, there would be one strong central federal government for the whole country, and each province would have its own government to deal with matters affecting that province. The BNA Act spelled out the responsibilities and powers of the federal and provincial governments.

Here are some of its main points:

5. *Canada shall be divided into Four Provinces, named Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.*
9. *The Executive Government and Authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen.*
16. *Until the Queen otherwise directs, the Seat of Government of Canada shall be Ottawa.*
17. *There shall be One Parliament for Canada, consisting of the Queen, an Upper House styled the Senate, and the House of Commons.*
58. *For each Province there shall be an Officer, styled the Lieutenant Governor, appointed by the Governor General in Council by Instrument under the Great Seal of Canada.*