



British North America Act 1867

1867 CHAPTER 3

IV.—LEGISLATIVE POWER

17 Constitution of Parliament of Canada.

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

18 Privileges, &c, of Houses.

The Privileges, Immunities, and Powers to be held, enjoyed, and exercised by the Senate and by the House of Commons and by the Members thereof respectively shall be such as are from Time to Time defined by Act of the Parliament of *Canada*, but so that the same shall never exceed those at the passing of this Act held, enjoyed, and exercised by the Commons House of Parliament of the United Kingdom of *Great Britain* and *Ireland* and by the Members thereof.

19 First Session of the Parliament of Canada.

The Parliament of *Canada* shall be called together not later than Six Months after the Union.

20 Yearly Session of the Parliament of Canada.

There shall be a Session of the Parliament of *Canada* once at least in every Year, so that Twelve Months shall not intervene between the last Sitting of the Parliament in one Session and its first Sitting in the next Session.

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The Senate

21 Number of Senators.

The Senate shall, subject to the Provisions of this Act, consist of Seventy-two Members, who shall be styled Senators.

22 Representation of Provinces in Senate.

In relation to the Constitution of the Senate *Canada* shall be deemed to consist of Three Divisions :

1. *Ontario*;
2. *Quebec*;
3. The Maritime Provinces, *Nova Scotia* and *New Brunswick* ; which Three Divisions shall (subject to the Provisions of this Act) be equally represented in the Senate as follows: *Ontario* by Twenty-four Senators; *Quebec* by Twenty-four Senators; and the Maritime Provinces by Twenty-four Senators, Twelve thereof representing *Nova Scotia*, and Twelve thereof representing *New Brunswick*.

In the Case of *Quebec* each of the Twenty-four Senators representing that Province shall be appointed for One of the Twenty-four Electoral Divisions of *Lower Canada* specified in Schedule A. to Chapter One of the Consolidated Statutes of *Canada*.

23 Qualifications of Senator.

The Qualifications of a Senator shall be as follows:

- (1) He shall be of the full Age of Thirty Years :
- (2) He shall be either "a natural-born Subject of the Queen, or a Subject of the Queen naturalized by an Act of the Parliament of *Great Britain*, or of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, or of the Legislature of One of the Provinces of *Upper Canada*, *Lower Canada*, *Canada*, *Nova Scotia*, or *New Brunswick*, before the Union, or of the Parliament of *Canada* after the Union:
- (3) He shall be legally or equitably seised as of Freehold for his own Use and Benefit of Lands or Tenements held in Free and Common Socage, or seised or possessed for his own Use and Benefit of Lands or Tenements held in Franc-alieu or in Roture, within the Province for which he is appointed, of the Value of Four thousand Dollars, over and above all Rents, Dues, Debts, Charges, Mortgages, and Incumbrances due or payable out of or charged on or affecting the same:
- (4) His Real and Personal Property shall be together worth Four thousand Dollars over and above his Debts and Liabilities:
- (5) He shall be resident in the Province for which he is appointed:
- (6) In the Case of *Quebec* he shall have his Real Property Qualification in the Electoral Division for which he is appointed, or shall be resident in that Division.

24 Summons of Senator.

The Governor General shall from Time to Time, in the Queen's Name, by Instrument under the Great Seal of *Canada*, summon qualified Persons to the Senate; and, subject

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to the Provisions of this Act, every Person so summoned shall become and be a Member of the Senate and a Senator.

25 Summons of First Body of Senators.

Such Persons shall be first summoned to the Senate as the Queen by Warrant under Her Majesty's Royal Sign Manual thinks fit to approve, and their Names shall be inserted in the Queen's Proclamation of Union.

26 Addition of Senators in certain Cases.

If at any Time on the Recommendation of the Governor General the Queen thinks fit to direct that Three or Six Members be added to the Senate, the Governor General may by Summons to Three or Six qualified Persons (as the Case may be), representing equally the Three Divisions of *Canada*, add to the Senate accordingly.

27 Reduction of Senate to normal Number.

In case of such Addition being at any Time made, the Governor General shall not summon any Person to the Senate, except on a further like Direction by the Queen on the like Recommendation, until each of the Three Divisions of *Canada* is represented by Twenty-four Senators and no more.

28 Maximum Number of Senators.

The Number of Senators shall not at any Time exceed Seventy-eight.

29 Tenure of Place in Senate.

A Senator shall, subject to the Provisions of this Act, hold his Place in the Senate for Life.

30 Resignation of Place in Senate.

A Senator may by Writing under his Hand addressed to the Governor General resign his Place in the Senate, and thereupon the same shall be vacant.

31 Disqualification of Senators.

The Place of a Senator shall become vacant in any of the following Cases:

- (1) If for Two consecutive Sessions of the Parliament he fails to give his Attendance in the Senate :
- (2) If he takes an Oath or makes a Declaration or Acknowledgment of Allegiance, Obedience, or Adherence to a Foreign Power, or does an Act whereby he becomes a Subject or Citizen, or entitled to the Rights or Privileges of a Subject or Citizen, of a Foreign Power :
- (3) If he is adjudged Bankrupt or Insolvent, or applies for the Benefit of any Law relating to Insolvent Debtors, or becomes a public Defaulter:
- (4) If he is attainted of Treason or convicted of Felony or of any infamous Crime:

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- (5) If he ceases to be qualified in respect of Property or of residence; provided, that a Senator shall not be deemed to have ceased to be qualified in respect of Residence by reason only of his residing at the Seat of the Government of *Canada* while holding an Office under that Government requiring his Presence there.

32 Summons on Vacancy in Senate.

When a Vacancy happens in the Senate by Resignation, Death, or otherwise, the Governor General shall by Summons to a fit and qualified Person fill the Vacancy.

33 Questions as to Qualifications and Vacancies in Senate.

If any Question arises respecting the Qualification of a Senator or a Vacancy in the Senate the same shall be heard and determined by the Senate.

34 Appointment of Speaker of Senate.

The Governor General may from Time to Time, by Instrument under the Great Seal of *Canada*, appoint a Senator to be Speaker of the Senate, and may remove him and appoint another in his Stead.

35 Quorum of Senate.

Until the Parliament of *Canada* otherwise provides, the Presence of at least Fifteen Senators, including the Speaker, shall be necessary to constitute a Meeting of the Senate for the Exercise of its Powers.

36 Voting in Senate.

Questions arising in the Senate shall be decided by a Majority of Voices, and the Speaker shall in all Cases have a Vote, and when the Voices are equal the Decision shall be deemed to be in the Negative.

The House of Commons

37 Constitution of House of Commons in Canada.

The House of Commons shall, subject to the Provisions of this Act, consist of One hundred and eighty-one Members; of whom Eighty-two shall be elected for *Ontario*, Sixty-five for *Quebec*, Nineteen for *Nova Scotia*, and Fifteen for *New Brunswick*.

38 Summoning of House of Commons.

The Governor General shall from Time to Time, in the Queen's Name, by Instrument under the Great Seal of *Canada*, summon and call together the House of Commons.

39 Senators not to sit in House of Commons.

A Senator shall not be capable of being elected sitting or voting as a Member of the House of Commons.

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40 Electoral Districts of the Four Provinces.

Until the Parliament of *Canada* otherwise provides, *Ontario*, *Quebec*, *Nova Scotia*, and *New Brunswick* shall, for the Purposes of the Election of Members to serve in the House of Commons, be divided into Electoral Districts as follows:

1.—ONTARIO.

Ontario shall be divided into the Counties, Ridings of Counties, Cities, Parts of Cities, and Towns enumerated in the First Schedule to this Act, each whereof shall be an Electoral District, each such District as numbered in that Schedule being entitled to return One Member.

2.—QUEBEC.

Quebec shall be divided into Sixty-five Electoral Districts, composed of the Sixty-five Electoral Divisions into which *Lower Canada* is at the passing of this Act divided under Chapter Two of the Consolidated Statutes of *Canada*, Chapter Seventy-five of the Consolidated Statutes for *Lower Canada*, and the Act of the Province of *Canada* of the Twenty-third Year of the Queen, Chapter One, or any other Act amending the same in force at the Union, so that each such Electoral Division shall be for the Purposes of this Act an Electoral District entitled to return One Member.

3.—NOVA SCOTIA.

Each of the Eighteen Counties of *Nova Scotia* shall be an Electoral District. The County of *Halifax* shall be entitled to return Two Members, and each of the other Counties One Member.

4.—NEW BRUNSWICK.

Each of the Fourteen Counties into which *New Brunswick* is divided, including the City and County of St. John, shall be an Electoral District. The City of St. John shall also be a separate Electoral District. Each of those Fifteen Electoral Districts shall be entitled to return One Member.

41 Continuance of existing Election Laws until Parliament of Canada otherwise provides.

Until the Parliament of *Canada* otherwise provides, all Laws in force in the several Provinces at the Union relative to the following Matters or any of them, namely,—the Qualifications and Disqualifications of Persons to be elected or to sit or vote as Members of the House of Assembly or Legislative Assembly in the several Provinces, the Voters at Elections of such Members, the Oaths to be taken by Voters, the Returning Officers, their Powers and Duties, the Proceedings at Elections, the Periods during which Elections may be continued, the Trial of controverted Elections, and Proceedings incident thereto, the vacating of Seats of Members, and the Execution of new Writs in case of Seats vacated otherwise than by Dissolution,—shall respectively apply to Elections of Members to serve in the House of Commons for the same several Provinces.

Provided that, until the Parliament of *Canada* otherwise provides, at any Election for a Member of the House of Commons for the District of *Algoma*, in addition to Persons qualified by the Law of the Province of *Canada* to vote, every Male *British Subject*, aged Twenty-one Years or upwards, being a Householder, shall have a Vote.

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42 Writs for First Election.

For the First Election of Members to serve in the House of Commons the Governor General shall cause Writs to be issued by-such Person, in such Form, and addressed to such Returning Officers as he thinks

The Person issuing Writs under this Section shall have the like Powers as are possessed at the Union by the Officers charged with the issuing of Writs for the Election of Members to serve in the respective House of Assembly or Legislative Assembly of the Province of *Canada, Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick*; and the Returning Officers to whom Writs are directed under this Section shall have the like Powers as are possessed at the Union by the Officers charged with the returning of Writs for the Election of Members to serve in the same respective House of Assembly or Legislative Assembly.

43 As to Casual Vacancies.

In case a Vacancy in the Representation in the House of Commons of any Electoral District happens before the Meeting of the Parliament, or after the Meeting of the Parliament before Provision is made by the Parliament in this Behalf, the Provisions of the last foregoing Section of this Act shall extend and apply to the issuing and returning of a Writ in respect of such vacant District.

44 As to Election of Speaker of House of Commons.

The House of Commons, on its first assembling after a General Election shall proceed with all practicable Speed to elect One of its Members to be Speaker.

45 As to filling up Vacancy in Office of Speaker.

In case of a Vacancy happening in the Office of Speaker by Death, Resignation, or otherwise, the House of Commons shall with all practicable Speed proceed to elect another of its Members to be Speaker.

46 Speaker to preside.

The Speaker shall preside at all Meetings of the House of Commons.

47 Provision in case of Absence of Speaker.

Until the Parliament of *Canada* otherwise provides, in case of the Absence for any Reason of the Speaker from the Chair of the House of Commons for a Period of Forty-eight consecutive Hours, the House may elect another of its Members to act as Speaker, and the Member so elected shall during the Continuance of such Absence of the Speaker have and execute all the Powers, Privileges, and Duties of Speaker.

48 Quorum of House of Commons.

The Presence of at least Twenty Members of the House of Commons shall be necessary to constitute a Meeting of the House for the Exercise of its Powers, and for that Purpose the Speaker shall be reckoned as a Member.

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49 Voting in House of Commons.

Questions arising in the House of Commons shall be decided by a Majority of Voices other than that of the Speaker, and when the Voices are equal, but not otherwise, the Speaker shall have a Vote.

50 Duration of House of Commons.

Every House of Commons shall continue for Five Years from the Day of the Return of the Writs for choosing the House (subject to be sooner dissolved by the Governor General), and no longer.

51 Decennial Re-adjustment of Representation.

On the Completion of the Census in the Year One thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, and of each subsequent decennial Census, the Representation of the Four Provinces shall be readjusted by such Authority, in such Manner, and from such Time, as the Parliament of *Canada* from Time to Time provides, subject and according to the following Rules :

- (1) *Quebec* shall have the fixed Number of Sixty-five Members.
- (2) There shall be assigned to each of the other Provinces such a Number of Members as will bear the same Proportion to the Number of its Population (ascertained at such Census) as the Number Sixty-five bears to the Number of the Population of *Quebec* (so ascertained):
- (3) In the Computation of the Number of Members for a Province a fractional Part not exceeding One Half of the whole Number requisite for entitling the Province to a Member shall be disregarded; but a fractional Part exceeding One Half of that Number shall be equivalent to the whole Number:
- (4) On any such Re-adjustment the Number of Members for a Province shall not be reduced unless the Proportion which the Number of the Population of the Province bore to the Number of the aggregate Population of *Canada* at the then last preceding Re-adjustment of the Number of Members for the Province is ascertained at the then latest Census to be diminished by One Twentieth Part or upwards:
- (5) Such Re-adjustment shall not take effect until the Termination of the then existing Parliament.

52 Increase of Number of House of Commons.

The Number of Members of the House of Commons may be from Time to Time increased by the Parliament of *Canada*, provided the proportionate Representation of the Provinces prescribed by this Act is not thereby disturbed.

Money Votes; Royal Assent

53 Appropriation and Tax Bills.

Bills for appropriating any Part of the Public Revenue, or for imposing any Tax or Impost, shall originate in the House of Commons.

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54 Recommendation of Money Votes.

It shall not be lawful for the House of Commons to adopt or pass any Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill for the Appropriation of any Part of the Public Revenue, or of any Tax or Impost, to any Purpose that has not been first recommended to that House by Message of the Governor General in the Session in which such Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill is proposed.

55 Royal Assent to Bills, &c.

Where a Bill passed by the Houses of the Parliament is presented to the Governor General for the Queen's Assent, he shall declare, according to his Discretion, but subject to the Provisions of this Act and to Her Majesty's Instructions, either that he assents thereto in the Queen's Name, or that he withholds the Queen's Assent, or that he reserves the Bill for the Signification of the Queen's Pleasure.

56 Disallowance by Order in Council of Act assented to by Governor General.

Where the Governor General assents to a Bill in the Queen's Name, he shall by the first convenient Opportunity send an authentic Copy of the Act to One of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, and if the Queen in Council within Two Years after Receipt thereof by the Secretary of State thinks fit to disallow the Act, such Disallowance (with a Certificate of the Secretary of State of the Day on which the Act was received by him) being signified by the Governor General, by Speech or Message to each of the Houses of the Parliament or by Proclamation, shall annul the Act from and after the Day of such Signification.

57 Signification of Queen's Pleasure on Bill reserved.

A Bill reserved for the Signification of the Queen's Pleasure shall not have any Force unless and until, within Two Years from the Day on which it was presented to the Governor General for the Queen's Assent, the Governor General signifies, by Speech or Message to each of the Houses of the Parliament or by Proclamation, that it has received the Assent of the Queen in Council. An Entry of every such Speech, Message, or Proclamation shall be made in the Journal of each House, and a Duplicate thereof duly attested shall be delivered to the proper Officer to be kept among the Records of *Canada*.