

The Statute of Westminster (1931)

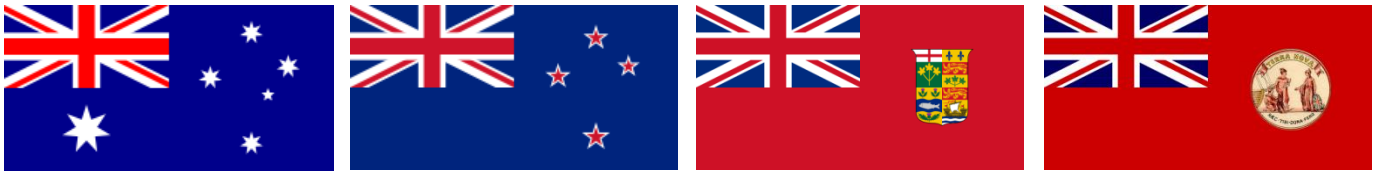
Canada's legislative independence

REMEMBER! Canada's unwritten constitution includes the idea of **Responsible Government**, which means that The King must follow the advice of his elected ministers (i.e. the prime minister).



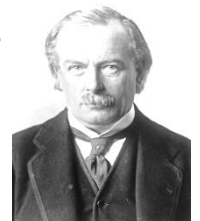
*There are a few instances where The King can act without advice (i.e. appointing a prime minister), but this is very rare.

Prior to 1931 . . .



This is why when Britain declared war in 1914 the entire empire (including Canada) was automatically at war.

As prime minister of the United Kingdom, I have the right to **ADVISE** the British Crown to declare war on behalf of Canada and the rest of the empire.



After the Statute of Westminster (1931)



Separate Crowns Are Created



As prime minister of Canada, with the confidence of the Canadian Parliament, I alone now **ADVISE** the King of Canada to declare war (as I did in 1939).



Since the Statute of Westminster (1931), as prime minister of the United Kingdom, I can only advise the King of the United Kingdom for Britain (UK) and parts of the Empire that don't have self-government.

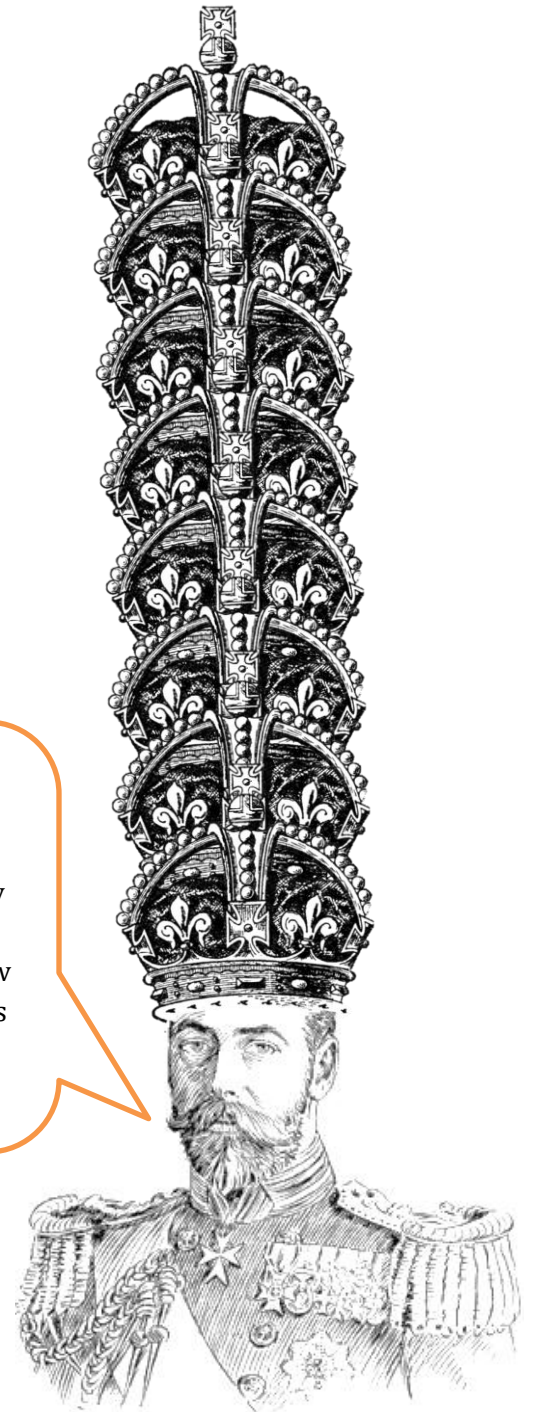


Another way to think of it . . .

This resource was created in consultation with Mr. Richard Berthelsen, advisor to governors general of Canada, and former private secretary to the lieutenant governor of Ontario. Altered in 2023.

I am King George V. Before the Statute of Westminster (1931) I was King of the United Kingdom (Emperor of India) only. One person, one Crown.

After the Statute of Westminster I also became, separately, King of Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Irish Free State (who were now able to legislate for themselves without British interference). One person, seven Crowns!!



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