

Canada's Head of State



In depiction above, King John gives royal assent to the Magna Carta.

Canada's form of government is a constitutional monarchy that was created over 800 years ago, in 1215, when King John of England gave royal assent to the Magna Carta (Great Charter) which took away the right of the monarch to make the rules and gave that right to a parliament which was overseen by the monarch.

This parliament eventually included members elected by the common people and became the democratic form of government it is today.

Although the Magna Carta authorized parliament to make the rules, this charter kept the monarch as the head of state to protect the people from dictatorship. When parliament does not have the confidence of the people, the monarch dissolves parliament and requests the people to elect a new parliament.

The Monarch of Canada, Queen Elizabeth II, oversees the Parliament of Canada by her representative, the Governor General, and also oversees the parliaments of the provinces by her other representatives, the Lieutenant Governors.

The prime minister is responsible for overall management of the administrative branch of government. The prime minister is not the head of state. Like other members of parliament, the prime minister is only allowed to have one vote in the legislative process.<