

PRIMARYDOCUMENTS.CA

A SEARCHABLE DATABASE OF HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE DRAFTING AND ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA.

Annual Report: 2018

Our New Book Collection: Canada's Primary Constitutional Documents

We are releasing our first book in our new collection – *1865: The Confederation Debates in the Province of Canada*. The collection will be a series of important documents in Canada's constitutional history. Our first volume covers the 1865 debates in the Province of Canada on the motion to adopt the Quebec Resolutions.

1865: The Confederation Debates in the Province of Canada: We have modernized these debates for the first time since their original publication in 1865 (without changing any of the content). The original debates filled over a thousand pages of densely-packed and faded text, not to mention paragraphs that went on for pages. Readers often had to flip back dozens of pages to find out who was speaking. Our new version remedies all these problems, and added many new features. We have added footnotes for better comprehensibility and a stand-alone index that allows the reader to search the debates by subject, participant, legislation, section of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and many more criteria for the first time.

We have already started working on our next publications. One volume will focus on the records of the Charlottetown, Quebec, and London Conferences, while another volume will focus on the Confederation Debates that took place in the other provinces, such as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Our collection will be published by the Canadian Constitution Foundation.

New Search Engine, Legal Citations

We have completely overhauled our search engine in 2018. Our new search engine is highly intuitive. You can search documents chronologically, by author, by section of the Constitution, and now, by category. The categorization of documents was done by following the categories of documents laid out in the *Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation*.

We have also added legal citations to every document in our online collection. These citations will allow the user to copy the citation right from the PrimaryDocuments website.

PrimaryDocuments in the Academic World

Our website has been cited by universities, academic journals, and legal blogs from across Canada. Our website now appears in library guides or course syllabii at the following institutions: University of Ottawa, Concordia University, York University, Carleton University, and UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal). We have also been cited by Canadian Senator, Percy Downe in his *Policy Options* article

“Many discrepancies in plans for toll-free Champlain Bridge”. And of course, numerous legal blogs are linking to us.

Previously, PrimaryDocuments.ca was cited by noted legal scholar and jurist, John Finnis in his article: “The Coxford Lecture Patriation and Patrimony: The Path to the Charter” in *the Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*.

2018 in Numbers

Our website has enjoyed a six-fold increase in 2018 (from 2017) in regards to the number of unique users visiting the site. This includes users from over 40 different countries.

The total number of documents in our collection is just over 1,600 with hundreds in the queue to go up soon. Some may note that this is significantly down from our 2017 total (around 2,500). The reason is simple. We are in the midst of a thorough quality check (alongside the renovations we did to the site in 2018 to make it more user-friendly).

Like the documents currently on our site, we want to ensure that the rest of our documents are first categorized, assigned an author, and given a legal citation before being reuploaded. We also have removed duplicate documents and consolidated any documents that were unnecessarily divided into segments. Once we have given the rest of our documents the same quality check (ensuring they are also classified and given a proper citation), we do expect our document numbers to go back up to the 2017 range. From there, we will continue to grow as we have a substantial list of documents on order.

Feedback

We love to hear back from our users or potential users on how we can better our site. We are also looking for anyone who would like to become involved in the project. We have a contact form on the site. You can also email us at pd@theccf.ca.