

# Parliamentary Bookshelf: Reviews

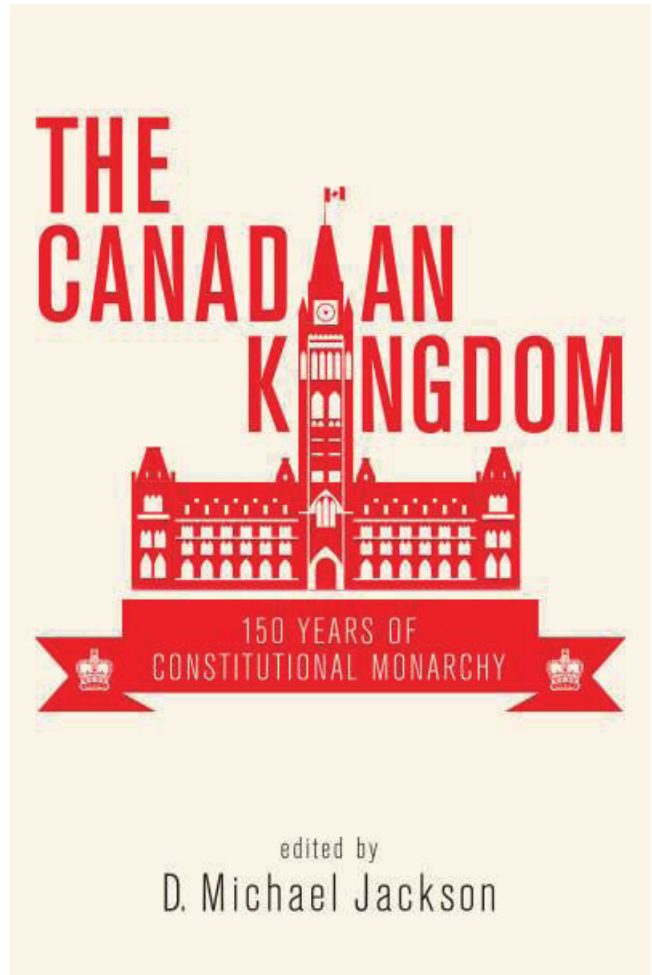
*The Canadian Kingdom: 150 Years of Constitutional Monarchy*, D. Michael Jackson, ed., Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2018, 248 pp

As a monarchist, *The Canadian Kingdom* had already been on my radar before I was asked to write this review. When provided this opportunity, I knew that I would have to consciously acknowledge this bias in order to provide an effective review. Coincidentally, the day after I was asked to write the review, I received an invitation to attend a book launch hosted by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, Elizabeth Dowdeswell. I suppose my monarchical tendencies are more broadly known than I realized.

*The Canadian Kingdom* is, at first glance, the type of text one might find listed on a syllabus of required reading for a university course on constitutional law or political science. Yet, while it can certainly be brought into the academic realm, it is no less an enlightening read for anyone interested in the building blocks of the Canadian Constitution and the influence of the monarchy thereon. I am glad that I did not let the guise of an academic text discourage a casual read, as each essay on its own has an easy flow and structure, unlike some academic texts, and taken together the entire collection has a solid structure.

The book is divided into four parts: The Crown in Canadian History; The Crown and Indigenous Peoples; The Crown and Contemporary Canada; and, The Crown and the Realms. Each part is well and worthy on its own merits, yet when brought together here, the common thread that “[o]ur unique constitutional monarchy, the product of 150 years of thought, compromise and accident, is a fluke work of genius” (p. 22) is evident and a key concept in Part 3 of the book.

Editor D. Michael Jackson successfully assembled an accomplished field of 11 contributors, including academics, a former Lieutenant Governor, and a sitting Senator. The venerable John Fraser, long-time master of Massey College and founding president of The Institute for the Study of the Crown in Canada, co-wrote the preface and contributed the final essay.



Part 1, consisting of three essays, is an interesting reflection on the development of Canada. The first essay by Barbara Messamore brings an interesting view on Confederation. She details how Canada's birth was “not a dramatic change that pivots on 1867, but continuity, the gradual evolution that has characterized Canada's constitutional history” (p. 29). Carolyn Harris set aside her royal commentary hat to provide a look at how the monarchy and Indigenous art in Canada developed together from Queen Anne to the present. Robert Hawkins rounds out the three essays by discussing the involvement of Canadians and Canada's Crown at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In Part 2, the focus turns from the Crown and the creation of Canada to the Crown's impact, influence, and interconnection to Canada's Indigenous peoples. As a first generation Canadian, my understanding of Indigenous relations between the Crown and country has been rather meagre. I delved into this part of the book hoping to emerge with enhanced knowledge and I am pleased to say that neither Steven Point (the former British Columbia Lieutenant Governor and elected Indigenous Chief) nor Nathan Tidridge disappointed. Point provided an engaging first-person narrative of being both a man of Indigenous ancestry while serving as the representative of the Crown in British Columbia. Tidridge traced the development of the treaties and the "Dignified Crown" (p. 18).

Part 3 moves from the history of the Crown in Canada to its modern impact and the influence of the "Queen of Canada" and the roles of the Lieutenant Governors. Andrew Heard begins with his essay "The Crown in Canada: Is There a Canadian Monarchy?" where he details the evolution of the legislative rise of the "Queen of Canada" from the "colonial origins of the relationship" (p. 115).

Senator Serge Joyal continues this theme with his essay "The Oath of Allegiance: A New Perspective" detailing the development of the oath from 1867 which was "focused on the person of the Queen" to the modern oath that "identifies the Queen, the Crown, as an ideal that embodies the values and principles of Canada" (pp. 132-133).

Christopher McCreery, Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, rounds out the series of essays with his on "The Vulnerability of Vice-Regal Offices in Canada" and vindicates my personal use of the phrase "paradoxical dichotomy"

(p. 157) in explaining the relationship of the Lieutenant Governors' separation from, and dependence on, the government of the day.

The final three essays in Part 4 effectively leave the confines of the land stretching from sea to sea to sea for surveys of the Crown in Australia and the other realms. Essays penned by Peter Boyce and Sean Palmer are complemented by the final essay by John Fraser on how the "Queen of Canada Helps the Queen of the United Kingdom". In a jovial first person narrative, Fraser's essay, originally a part of an address given at The Charterhouse in London in 2016, elaborates how "Canada offers a valid and working precedent of holding a country together through the symbolism of the Crown" (p. 229), to the "Queen of the United Kingdom" through the lessons learned by the "Queen of Canada."

Overall, *The Canadian Kingdom* is well worth the time for any and all readers interested in experiencing a breadth of views on the Canadian Crown. My only serious critique is the brevity of Part 2 on the Crown and Indigenous Peoples. While the other parts of this collection each contained three contributions, Part 2 had only two and could have benefitted from an additional voice – perhaps former Ontario Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman.

*The Canadian Kingdom* is edited by D. Michael Jackson. Jackson is the former chief of protocol for the Government of Saskatchewan and the current president of The Institute for the Study of the Crown in Canada at Massey College, the collection's sponsor.

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