

FIRST GOVERNMENT OF MAURICE DUPLESSIS

(AUGUST 26, 1936 TO OCTOBER 25, 1939)



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Source: Archives nationales du Québec

••• Constitutional amending procedure

1. The federal pact, by participating in the nature of conventions, can neither be amended nor modified without the agreement of all the parties, i.e. of all the provinces.¹

••• Distribution of powers

General principles

2. The provinces, to give birth to the federation, agreed to transfer to the federal entity a portion of their powers, but retained, apart from the legislative

powers not ceded, their political entity and special constitution. They therefore remained, in their own sphere, sovereign states. The powers and attributes of the provinces do not flow from the central government; on the contrary, the central government was born of the common will of the provinces.²

3. The centralization that some circles averse to provincial rights seem to want is a national and social evil [...]. The country's prosperity does not depend on greater centralization of legislative powers. On the contrary, the closer the legislature's contact with the communities for which it legislates, the greater the likelihood that the legislation will be truly productive.³

••• Intergovernmental policy

Conducting intergovernmental relations

4. The province of Québec is ready to cooperate closely in establishing an equitable and effective unemployment insurance system that is national in scope, but does not encroach on provincial rights and autonomy.⁴

1. Brief submitted by the Québec government, public hearings of the *Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations*, May 12, 1938, p. 4 (quotation). When a paragraph reproduces a statement in full, it is indicated by the expression "quotation". Otherwise, the position expressed by the government is paraphrased as faithfully as possible. Translator's note: in some cases, the quotations originate from existing texts in English or were translated previously for use in the volume: *Québec's Traditional Constitutional Positions 1936-1990*; all other quotations have been translated to update the current publication. Only the latter bear the usual indication: [Translation].

2. *Ibid.*, p. 4 (quotation).

3. *Ibid.*, p. 5 (quotation).

4. Letter from Maurice Duplessis to W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, December 30, 1937 (quotation).