

PREFACE

Canada and the UK are both multilevel political systems. One is officially federal while the other has an asymmetrical system of devolution, without constitutional limitations on the power of the centre. Despite these formal differences, the two systems of government have much in common. They are both parliamentary systems sharing a common heritage and both are advanced welfare states. They share many of the same dilemmas as they adapt to changing economic, social and political conditions in the modern world. These include the management of national diversity; territorial equity and welfare; the distribution of resources and taxation; legal disputes over the powers of the two levels and their resolution; intergovernmental relations; and the process of constitutional change.

In the chapters that follow, we review these issues in a comparative key, looking at the experience of the two cases and putting them in a broader context. Canada and the UK are not only interesting in their own right but they provide a focus for examining issues of spatial rescaling, state transformation and federalism, which are of wider relevance across the world.

This book is the product of a collaboration between the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Society of Canada as part of a partnership agreement. These two societies assembled teams of scholars from Canada and Scotland to address contemporary issues in federalism and devolution. Starting with case studies from the UK and Canada,

they were asked to produce comparative chapters examining common features and differences. The project was also supported by the Centre on Constitutional Change (Edinburgh and Aberdeen) and the Chaire de Recherche du Canada en Etudes Québécoises et Canadiennes (Montreal). We are grateful for their support and to the colleagues who discussed our draft chapters and contributed ideas. It is our intention to continue this collaboration and enrich the comparative understanding of constitutional change in our two countries and their component nations.

Edinburgh, UK
Quebec City, Canada
March 2017

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Constitutional Politics and the Territorial Question in
Canada and the United Kingdom

Federalism and Devolution Compared

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2018, XIV, 194 p. 13 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-58073-9