



## 6. PARLIAMENT HILL CARD

Parliament Hill, located in Ottawa, Ont., is the seat of the federal government, where senators and members of Parliament work together to support the interests of all Canadians.

Canada is a constitutional monarchy, which means that the British monarch is the country's head of state, while the prime minister serves as the head of government. The monarch, Senate, and House of Commons are the three most important branches of Parliament, and, together, they are responsible for creating new laws. The governor general represents the monarch in Canada and acts on their behalf to sign bills created and passed by Parliament into law.

### History

- **Breaking new ground**

On December 20, 1859, construction of the first Parliament building, known today as Centre Block, began.

- **A new dominion**

On July 1, 1867, the Dominion of Canada was formed, comprising Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The Parliament buildings in Ottawa will serve as the seat of government once construction is completed. Parliament's first session opened on November 6, 1867.

- **Continued growth**

In 1870, Canada expanded to include Manitoba, the North West Territories (which are today known as Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut), British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island. To meet the growing needs of Parliament, the Langevin Block is built on Wellington Street, becoming the first departmental office built off of Parliament Hill. Canada continued to grow, and in 1905, Saskatchewan and Alberta entered Confederation. In the following decade, more additions were made to Parliament Hill to accommodate the growth of the federal government.

- **The Fire of 1916**

In the evening of February 3, 1916, while the House of Commons was sitting, a fire broke out in the Centre Block of the Parliament buildings. Shortly after midnight, the Victoria Tower Bell crashes to the ground and strong winds spread the fire, engulfing the Senate. Seven lives are lost. The damage is extensive and Centre Block is in ruins, with only the Library of Parliament surviving intact. The Victoria Memorial Museum (which is the current home of the Canadian Museum of Nature) is chosen as the temporary Parliament building while reconstruction takes place.

- **National Historic Site**

In 1976, the grounds of Parliament were designated as a national historic site.



### Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map:

- If you follow the Rideau Canal to where it pours into the Ottawa River, you are close. Look for a democratic "other" icon (see legend) that borders the Ottawa River.