

The Crown Under the Microscope: An OSINT Look at the British Monarchy

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The British Crown is still the legal foundation of Canada, and an open-source look at the record shows an institution that is older, richer and less accountable than most people realize. From Moncton, in unceded Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq territory, that is not an abstract question: about half of New Brunswick is Crown land.

Over the past few years, Marie Landry Spy Shop has published a series of OSINT reports on the monarchy in its [free research library](#). This post brings their main findings together and checks them against current public sources, so you can judge the evidence for yourself.

What the Crown actually is

The Crown is two things at once: a jewelled object and a legal person that stands in for the state. Our report [The Crown of the British Monarchy](#) traces how English law turned the king's personal power into a "corporation sole" that never dies, so the realm's land and authority pass automatically from one monarch to the next.

That power was limited step by step: Magna Carta in 1215, the Civil War and execution of Charles I, then the Glorious Revolution and the Bill of Rights of 1689, which made Parliament supreme. Today the King opens Parliament, gives Royal Assent and holds the royal prerogative, but almost always on the advice of elected ministers.

In Canada, King Charles III is head of state, and the Crown is the legal owner of public land and the party in every treaty. Changing that is deliberately hard: section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982, requires the Senate, the House of Commons and all ten provincial legislatures to agree before the office of the monarch can be altered, as our [OSINT Special Report on the Crown's contested title](#) points out.

Land, title and the Doctrine of Discovery

The Crown's claim to North American land rests on the Doctrine of Discovery, a 15th-century idea that Christian monarchs could claim lands not ruled by Christians. Our report [A Shared Inheritance](#) follows it from three papal bulls (Dum Diversas in 1452,

Romanus Pontifex in 1455 and Inter Caetera in 1493) to the secular rules European powers used to divide the world, which Protestant England adopted even while rejecting the Pope.

On March 30, 2023, the Vatican formally repudiated the doctrine, saying the bulls did not reflect the equal dignity of Indigenous peoples. It did not rescind them, and the British Crown has made no equivalent statement.

In New Brunswick, the question is in court. The Wolastoqey Nations claim Aboriginal title over more than half the province. In December 2025, the Court of Appeal limited the claim to government-owned land, with compensation rather than return for private land, and on May 28, 2026, the Supreme Court of Canada declined to hear an appeal. The claim over Crown land continues.

Our [OSINT Special Report](#) argues, from an Organic Law perspective, that a title founded on "discovery" is a legal fiction, and calls on Canada and the King to formally repudiate the doctrine and return undeveloped Crown land to Indigenous governments.

Money and accountability

Public funding for the monarchy rose by about half in 2025-26, to £132.1 million, because it is tied to Crown Estate profits that jumped with offshore wind leases. The Sovereign Grant equals 12% of Crown Estate profits from two years earlier; the share was cut from 25% in 2023, but the grant still grew.

Year	Sovereign Grant	Note
2024-25	£86.3 million	Before the offshore wind windfall
2025-26	£132.1 million	Including £60 million for Buckingham Palace renovations
2026-27	£137.9 million	Final renovation tranche

Source: [Sovereign Grant summary 2026](#), Royal Household.

The King and the heir also draw private income from two estates, the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall. As our book [The Accountability Deficit of King Charles III](#) explains, both are classed as Crown bodies and pay no corporation tax; the King pays income tax on his Duchy of Lancaster income voluntarily, not by law. See also our [OSINT report on the Duchies](#).

The same book documents the charity controversies of Charles's years as Prince of Wales:

- **Cash for honours.** An Ernst & Young review found his former valet Michael Fawcett, then head of The Prince's Foundation, worked with fixers to seek honours for a Saudi donor. The Metropolitan Police announced on August 21, 2023, that it would take no further action.
- **Bags of cash.** Charles accepted €3 million in cash from a former Qatari prime minister between 2011 and 2015. Clarence House said correct processes were followed, and the Charity Commission decided in 2022 not to investigate.
- **Black spider memos.** After the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 2 in March 2015, the government published 27 of his letters to ministers on May 13, 2015, reviving debate about royal neutrality.

None of these cases led to charges. Our reports argue that this reflects how hard such offences are to prove, and that the governance failures they exposed still matter.

Empire, apology and the case for change

The monarchy now acknowledges colonial wrongs but stops short of apologizing. In Kenya in 2023, King Charles called the abuses of the colonial era "a cause of the greatest sorrow and the deepest regret" and said there could be "no excuse", but he did not apologize. Our book [The Accountability Deficit of King Charles III](#) reads that choice of words as a way to avoid liability for reparations.

Scandal has also reached the family itself. On October 30, 2025, the King removed his brother Andrew's titles, including "prince", and ended his lease on Royal Lodge over his links to Jeffrey Epstein; he is now Andrew Mountbatten Windsor. Andrew has denied the allegations against him.

The wider structure is the Commonwealth: 56 countries and about 2.7 billion people, 15 of which still have Charles as head of state. Our policy paper [Delete the Commonwealth](#) argues it is a residue of empire with no means of enforcing its own human rights principles, and calls for its dissolution. The [Universal Declaration on the Rejection of Hereditary Monarchy](#) makes the broader case against inherited power.

Public opinion is moving in the same direction, especially among the young. In the British Social Attitudes survey published in September 2025, only 51% of Britons called the monarchy important, a record low, and 59% of people aged 16 to 34 preferred an elected head of state. Overall, 58% still favour keeping the monarchy.

The bottom line

The open record supports three conclusions. The Crown's title to Indigenous land rests on a doctrine its original author, the Vatican, has disowned. Its finances depend on public assets and tax arrangements most citizens would not get. And support is ageing: the next generation is far less attached to it.

Whether the answer is reform, a Canadian republic or a "confederation of nations", the debate deserves facts rather than pageantry. Read the full reports in the [research library](#), and see our [Acadie and New Brunswick](#) page for the history behind this land.

This post was researched and drafted with AI assistance from Claude and checked against the public sources below. It reports allegations as allegations; none of the charity investigations described led to charges.

Sources

- [Sovereign Grant summary 2026](#), Royal Household
- [Monarchy set to receive £132m for second year in a row](#), Irish News
- [Canada high court refuses to hear Aboriginal title appeal](#), JURIST, May 2026
- [Vatican rejects Discovery doctrine](#), Associated Press, March 30, 2023
- [No further action over cash-for-honours allegations](#), ITV News, August 21, 2023
- [Black spider memos](#), Wikipedia
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- [King Charles III strips prince title from Andrew](#), Cox Media Group, October 31, 2025
- [Public support for the monarchy falls to historic low](#), NatCen, September 2025
- [Commonwealth countries: all 56 member states](#), Geography Worlds