

### III. THE CONSTITUTION

#### FORM OF GOVERNMENT

According to paragraph 1 of the Icelandic constitution the form of government is a *limited monarchy*, and § 2 of the constitution prescribes that the legislative power rests jointly with the crown and Althingi. The executive power is vested in the crown, while the administration of justice is exercised by the courts. As will appear below the constitution has not followed this division of power with full consistency.

#### THE ROYAL POWER, THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND THE CABINET

*The king* has the highest power in all affairs of the State, subject to the reservations set forth in the constitution. The kingdom passes in direct male line to the descendants of king Christian IX and his queen, Louise. The Crown-prince, in order to succeed to the throne, must belong to the Lutheran Church; and he must not, without the sanction of Althingi and the Rigsdag, be the sovereign of another country. But in order to be able to exercise the royal power, he must have reached the age (18 years) fixed by the law; he must be so sound in mind and body as to be fit to discharge his official duties; he must be able personally to exercise his royal power, and he must have taken an oath of fidelity to the constitution. If the king is not in a condition to reign, the heir to the crown, a special regent, or the council of State, exercises the royal power ad interim. The king's person is sacred, and he enjoys in an especial degree the protection of the law. The Civil List of the king is fixed by law.

The king is exempted from responsibility, but *the ministers* are responsible for the conduct of affairs. The king appoints the ministers, accepts their resignation, fixes their number, and defines their respective spheres of action. As a rule, the ministers have been three since 1917, but sometimes a minister has been in charge of more than one department for a short period of time. The king decides which of the ministers shall be the premier. The seat of the government is Reykjavík. In order to be valid, all royal decrees, both concerning legislative and administrative affairs, must be countersigned by a minister. All laws and important measures must be laid before the king in *council* composed of the ministers and the Crown-prince, if he is of age, and presided over by the king. Outside Iceland the