

Creating a Nation

During READING

Checkpoint

Skimming means you are reading quickly across the lines, looking for main ideas and details. Scanning means that you are zigzagging up and down the page—most useful when you are looking for something specific, like a date, or a boldfaced word or name. Scan for visuals and subheadings to add information to your organizer.

KEY MATTER

conference a meeting for discussion of information or ideas

In the early 1860s, the colonies of British North America were weak and isolated. Most colonists were keen to retain ties with Britain. They saw the United States as a threat, and were not sure how they could defend themselves without Britain. Then, in 1864, events relating to British North America's future began to move quickly toward unification. During the next three years, the structure of modern Canada began to emerge.

The Charlottetown Conference

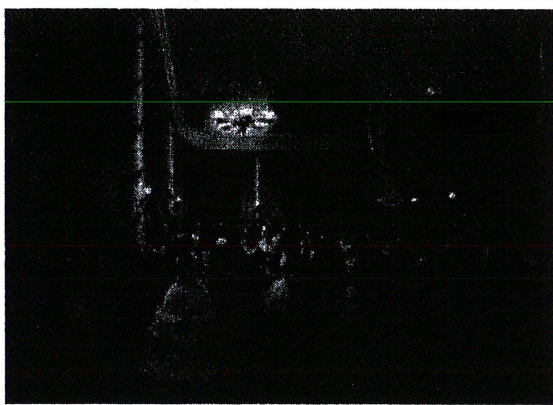
In September 1864, the Maritime colonies held a **conference** in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to discuss the idea of a Maritime union. British Columbia and Newfoundland were not invited. The Canadas were not Maritime colonies, but the leading politicians from the Canadas managed to get an invitation. Representatives from P.E.I., New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia met with representatives from the Canadas. The Canadians soon persuaded the Maritimers to give up their original plans. Instead, John A. Macdonald and his colleagues got them to consider a union with the Canadas.

The delegates at the conference agreed to support the idea of joining the Canadas and the Maritime colonies together. They also decided to meet again to discuss the plan further.

The Québec Conference

In October 1864, representatives of the colonies held a second conference in Québec City. This time Newfoundland attended as well, but British Columbia was too far away to be included. At Charlottetown, they had agreed to the principle of joining the colonies, but they had not discussed the details of how this would be done. In Québec City, they met for three weeks and worked out the rules for sharing power in the new country.

At the end of the conference, the delegates voted mostly in favour of the Québec Resolutions. These contained the details of how the new country would work. The following is a list of some of the features of Canada's government:



Women were not directly involved in the Confederation conferences. In the evenings, the wives and daughters of the delegates joined the men for dinners and dances, such as the one shown in this painting called *Ball at Legislature* by Dusan Kadlec. How might this kind of socializing help the men agree on important issues?

- A **federal** constitution. This meant there would be a government for the whole country, as well as for each province.
- Each level of government would be responsible for specific areas. For instance, **Indian** affairs were federal, whereas education was provincial, etc.
- In parliament, there would be a balance of representation by population and equal representation.
- There would be a balance between elected and appointed representatives.

John A. Macdonald was the main influence in the writing of these resolutions. In the parliament of the Canadas, he won support for the plan, with 91 votes in favour and 33 opposed.

Missing Voices

As had been the case in the Canadas in the 1850s, politicians paid no attention to First Nations' or black people's concerns. The politicians were men from Britain, Ireland, or France. They envisioned a Canada that would look very much like those countries. Parliament, the courts, the education system, and virtually everything else would be modelled after British and European examples.

Women were also ignored in the discussions, although they made up about half the population. Remember from Chapter 2 that women did not have any political representation. Although unfair, these groups were largely ignored in the discussions.



The resolutions that the Fathers of Confederation adopted laid the foundations for the way Canadian government is run to this day.

MATTER

federal relating to a system that has a central government as well as provincial or state governments

Indian the historic term for First Nations people. Though we now use the term First Nations, historic documents use "Indian," the federal government still has a Department of Indian Affairs, a name assigned at Confederation

CANADA MINUTE

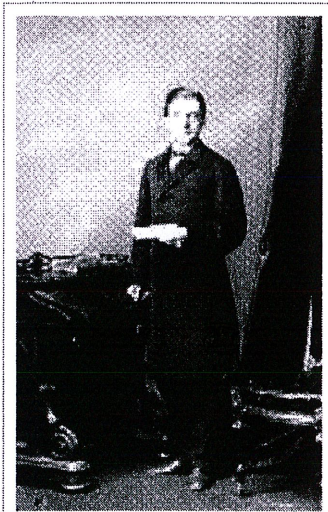


The Great Coalition

A coalition is a group of people, often political opponents, who agree to work together for a common goal. George Brown and John A. Macdonald, both Fathers of Confederation, disliked one another, but, in 1864, Brown put aside his personal feelings and offered to work together with Macdonald to find a solution to the colonies' problems. Later politicians have done the same thing. During times of war, political opponents have put aside their differences to work toward peace.

THE MATTER

Confederation the union of provinces and territories forming Canada



Antoine-Aimé Dorion

Opposition to the Québec Resolutions

Opinion was divided as to whether the Québec Resolutions were a good idea. Antoine-Aimé Dorion was the leader of Canada East's *Rouge* party. He believed that the proposals would lead to the destruction of the French culture in what would become Québec. Dorion wanted a referendum—vote by the people—on the plan for union, something Macdonald opposed. Dorion said:

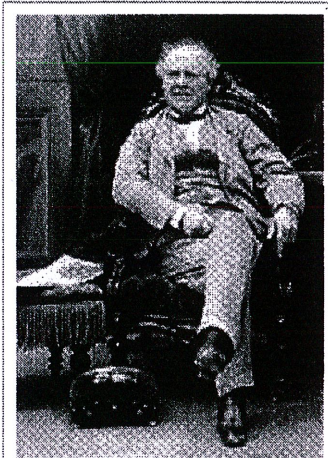
If confederation should be adopted without the people of this province's sanction, the entire country will sorely learn to regret it.

A young lawyer named Wilfrid Laurier wrote:

Twenty-five years ago the French nation... was more vigorous, more united, strongly French... Today it is... without strength, [and] divided... We must use all the influence we have left to obtain a free and separate government.

In the Maritimes, there was even more opposition. Joseph Howe was a journalist and politician from Halifax. He helped Nova Scotia to win responsible government in 1848 and was premier of that province from 1860 to 1863. While the **Confederation** conferences were being held, he was leader of the opposition to Nova Scotia's joining Confederation. He argued that the population was not being fully consulted, and that Nova Scotia would be overwhelmed by the larger provinces of Ontario and Québec. Howe also felt that the Canadas were too far away from Halifax for the union to be successful. He wrote in the *Halifax Chronicle*:

Did anybody ever propose to unite Scotland with Poland or Hungary? [They are] [i]nland countries [1300 km] off in the very heart of Europe.



Joseph Howe

Attitudes toward Confederation depended on the local concerns of each colony. Governments and people were often in conflict about the wisdom of the proposal. The following organizer summarizes the main issues in each of the colonies.

Colony	Government Leader	Attitude Toward Confederation
The Canadas	John A. Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier	Strongly in favour. Saw it as a way to expand the domestic economy and provide better defence against the U.S.
Nova Scotia	Charles Tupper	In favour, but in the Nova Scotia assembly his opponents defeated his request for support of the Resolutions.
New Brunswick	Leonard Tilley	In favour. His party was defeated in the assembly in 1865 when it asked for a vote for Confederation. Tilley became premier again in 1866 and led New Brunswick into Confederation even though there was widespread opposition among voters.
Prince Edward Island	James Pope	In favour, if the new government would pay \$800 000 to buy out the absentee landlords. The Liberal opposition called this bribery, and defeated Pope in 1867. The new government refused to join Confederation.
Newfoundland	Frederick Carter	In favour, but did not press the issue when civil disorder broke out over other issues in 1865. In 1869, he was defeated in an election by the Anti-Confederation party. Newfoundlanders feared that their traditional way of life would be undermined in Confederation.

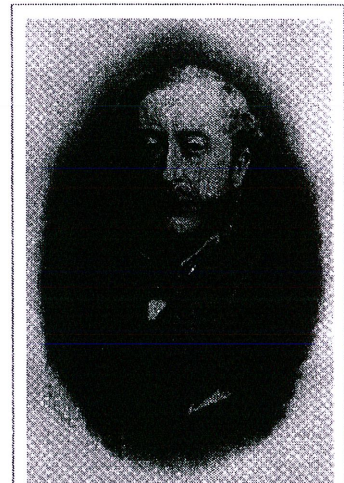
The London Conference

In December 1866, representatives of Canada West, Canada East, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia travelled to London, England. Newfoundland had dropped out of the discussions. The delegates took part in a conference with British officials about the future of the colonies. The colonial secretary, Lord Carnarvon, said of the conference's work

We are laying the foundation of a great State... perhaps one which at a future day may even overshadow [Britain]. But, come what may, we shall rejoice that we have shown neither indifference to their wishes nor jealousy of their aspirations.

Agreement was reached easily and Canada became Britain's first "self-governing Dominion." Canada retained the monarchy, and its membership in the British Empire. Since the king or queen had no real power in government, the monarchy remained a symbol and nothing more.

Canada had control over its internal affairs, but Britain would have control over foreign policy, meaning that Britain would negotiate with other countries on Canada's behalf. This situation continued until 1923. The conference delegates decided that Britain would continue to be responsible for any changes to the constitution of Canada, but only at the request of the Canadian parliament. It was not until 1982 that this power was officially handed over to Canada. As you can see, Canada was not entirely independent in 1867; however, it made some important steps in that direction.

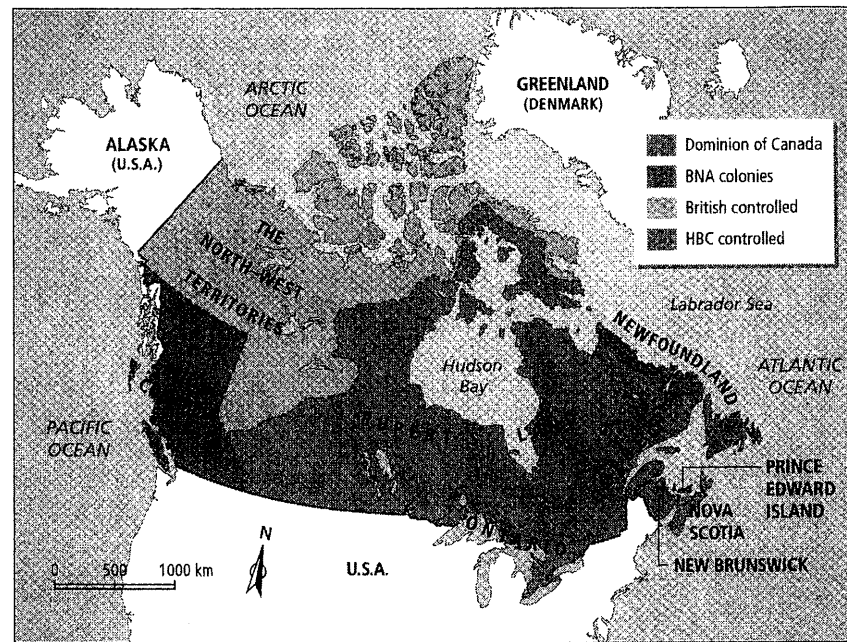


Lord Carnarvon. Predict reasons why you think he said the Canadas "may even overshadow [Britain]." How did you reach your conclusion?

Confederation

On July 1, 1867, a new country was born. The Dominion of Canada contained four provinces: Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Queen Victoria had already chosen Ottawa as the capital of the Canadas, and a new parliament building had opened there in 1866. These now became the capital and parliament of the new nation.

Canada, 1867



On that first “Canada Day,” there were celebrations in many locations. Canons were fired, bands played, and fireworks exploded. The future looked bright. It would take much effort, however, to make Canada a prosperous and united nation. The rest of Sir John A. Macdonald’s life, until he died in 1891, was dedicated to that goal.

THINKING It Over

1. Create and complete an organizer to show the dates, representatives attending, and key features of the Charlottetown Conference, the Québec Conference, and the London Conference. How does knowing this information help you better understand Canada’s political landscape today?
2. Look at the quotations from Antoine-Aimé Dorion, Wilfrid Laurier, Joseph Howe, and Lord Carnarvon. Rewrite what each said in your own words. Whose opinion comes closest to your own opinion about the Confederation of Canada? Why?



The British North America Act, 1867

The **act** that made Canada independent was originally called the British North America Act (BNA Act). In 1982, it was renamed the Constitution Act, 1867. Historians still use the old name to describe the events of Confederation.

Features of Canada's New Government

The BNA Act set the government up in the following manner:

Item	Details
A federal system	There would be a parliament for the whole country, plus a legislature for each province.
Bilingual features	French and English would be the languages of parliament, plus the legislature of Québec.
A balance of representation by population and equal representation	Parliament would have two houses. There would be representation by population in the House of Commons . In the Senate , each region (Ontario, Québec, and the Maritimes) would have the same number of seats.
A balance between elected and appointed representatives	The House of Commons would be elected by voters; the Senate would be appointed by the prime minister.

Having two levels of government could be difficult unless each level understood which areas it was responsible for. Look at the chart on page H 62. Sections 91, 92, and 93 of the BNA Act clearly laid out what the various responsibilities were.

The provinces were given powers that were considered less important in 1867. However, two of these—health care and education—have become very significant. Why do you think Macdonald did not want to give the provinces too much power?

THINKING It Over

1. Study the chart on page H 62. Which was the most powerful level of government in 1867? Today? Explain. 🌟 🌟
2. Some provincial governments today say that they should have more power. They say that they are

closer to the people than the federal government is, and could therefore do a better job of dealing with matters such as telecommunications or protecting the environment. With a classmate, discuss which level of government you think can best deal with such areas of responsibility, and why. 🌟 🌟 🌟

READING

Checkpoint

Review the questions on page H 53. Look for answers as you skim and scan this chapter. Add the information to your organizer. Continue adding new sections to the organizer, using headings in addition to pictures.

MATTER

act a piece of legislation passed by parliament

House of Commons the house of parliament that is elected by voters and is based on representation by population

Senate the house of parliament that is appointed by the prime minister and is based on equal representation for various regions



ZOOM IN

CASE STUDY

How the powers were divided between the federal and provincial governments

John A. Macdonald looked at the government of the United States and decided Canada's government should be different. In the U.S., the states have many important powers. The federal government has only the leftover powers, and matters of foreign policy and national defence. This is why, for instance, criminal law is different in every state in the United States. Some states practise capital punishment for first-degree murder, while others have abolished executions altogether.

Macdonald believed that the Americans had not arranged things well. He thought that giving individual states too much power makes a nation less united. He believed that this had, in part, caused the American Civil War (1861–1865). Some

states believed that they should have the right to practise slavery and refused to give up this right. This crisis nearly tore the country apart.

If the federal government had all the important powers, Macdonald believed, Canada could avoid having provinces leave the nation.

Not everything has gone to plan. Some powers that were considered unimportant and given to the provinces—such as health care and education—have since become important. Nova Scotia elected a separatist government in 1867. Québec held referendums on separation in 1980 and 1995. By and large, however, the division of powers has helped to keep Canada together.

Section	Clause	Item	Example
Section 91 (federal)	3	taxation	income tax, taxes on corporations, import duties
	7	national defence	the military
	24	Aboriginal affairs	Indian reserves and support (like health care and education)
	27	criminal law	making murder, smuggling, and theft illegal
	29	any item not specifically made a provincial power. (These are called residual powers.)	items that had not been invented in 1867, such as licensing of television stations or telecommunications networks
Section 92 (provincial)	2	limited powers of taxation	income tax, taxes on corporations, provincial sales tax
	7	health care	hospitals and licensing of doctors
	8	local government	the City of Toronto, Essex County (Windsor area)
	10	roads and bridges	maintaining highways that connect communities (whereas roads within communities are the responsibility of municipal governments)
Section 93 (provincial)	1	education	school boards, colleges, and universities

THINKING It Over

- For one week, look through local and national newspapers and magazines. Listen to television and radio broadcasts. Find issues connected to government, such as health care, Aboriginal issues, revenues from oil and natural gas. Keep a list of the topics, note which government is responsible, and whether or not there is a conflict between the two levels of government. Share your findings in a small group.
- Do some research to find out about a recent dispute between the federal government and the provinces about one of the following areas: Aboriginal people, health care, the environment, trade, or telecommunications. Explain (a) the federal position in the disagreement, (b) the provincial position, and (c) which position you feel makes more sense, and why.

BNA Act

Answer the following questions, and then compare your answers with your neighbor.

1. How would the BNA Act have looked if First Nations' and black peoples as well as women would have been invited? Explain.

2. How were the creators of the BNA Act able to balance both representation by population and equal representation? Today there are many that are calling for an elected Senate. Is this a good idea or should it be kept the same? Explain.

3. Looking at the list on page H62, are there any federal or provincial powers that you believe should be changed? Explain.
