

Tell the Government to Make Confederation a Theme of the 150th Anniversary of Confederation



You Can Help Save Canadian History!

Circulate and **sign the petition** to add your voice to the movement to make Confederation a theme of the 150th Anniversary of Canada.

What Was Confederation?

The Case for a Country

Confederation was the process that united British colonies as an independent Canada. The process took several years and the Dominion of Canada became an independent nation on July 1, 1867. In the 1860s there were significant problems faced by each of the provinces in British North America. These included:

- Political deadlock and factionalism in the Province of Canada's Assembly
- Fears of annexation by the United States
- Substantial economic and trade issues

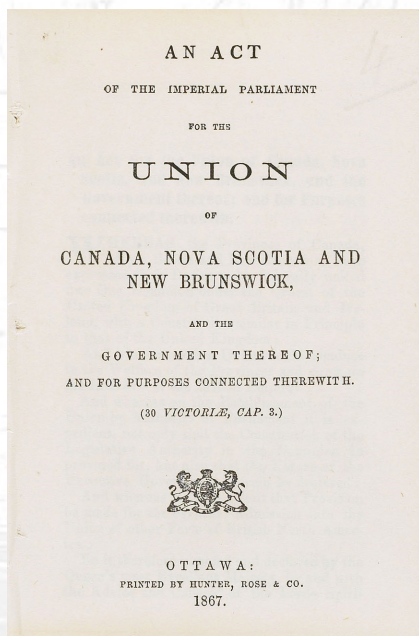
To resolve these problems, the leaders of the British North American colonies decided that the colonies should come together to form a new country.

The Conferences

The idea of Confederation was formally proposed at the Charlottetown Conference in September 1864. The next meeting was held at the Québec Conference in 1864. The attending delegates set the constitutional framework of the new country. The final conference in London, Great Britain began in December 1866. The text of the *British North America Act* was completed in early 1867.



The Charlottetown Conference, was the first official meeting of leaders to discuss the goal of a united Canada.



The British North America Act, 1867 was signed into law by Queen Victoria



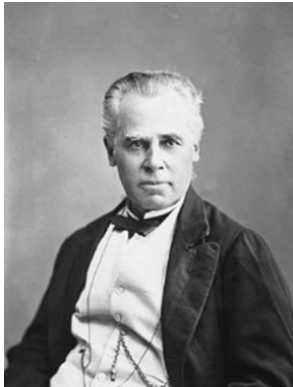
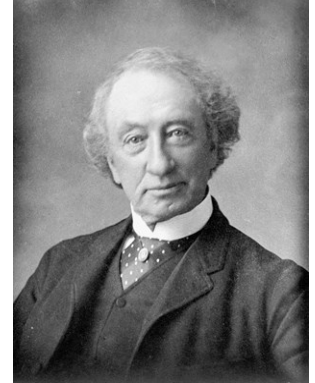
The Dominion of Canada in 1867

Who Were the Fathers of Confederation?

Between 1864 and 1867, 36 men gathered at three conferences to discuss the course for Canada to come into being as an independent nation. The following Fathers of Confederation were some of the most influential figures in the conferences and the Dominion of Canada's early years.

Sir John A. Macdonald

Sir John A. Macdonald led the Confederation conferences at Charlottetown, Québec and London. He was first elected in 1844 as representative for Kingston in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada (now southern portions of Ontario and Quebec). Macdonald was the constitutional mastermind of the Confederation conferences, writing fifty of the Seventy Two Resolutions. A skilled orator, strong leader, and convincing debater, Macdonald became Canada's first Prime Minister. Sir John A. Macdonald accomplished many projects that changed Canada forever, including connecting Canada's coasts through the Canada Pacific Railway, creating the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and welcoming seven provinces and territories to Confederation. Macdonald was Prime Minister from 1867 to 1873, and again from 1878 to his death in 1891. He is remembered today as one of the greatest Canadians in our history, and one with the greatest impact on the country.



Sir George-Étienne Cartier

Sir George-Étienne Cartier was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1848 and was appointed to cabinet in 1854. He is credited with gaining French Canadian support for Confederation, and was an active participant in negotiations with British Columbia to join Canada while in Macdonald's federal government. Cartier was active in politics until his death in 1873, leaving a legacy of unity between French and English Canada that helped Confederation come to fruition.

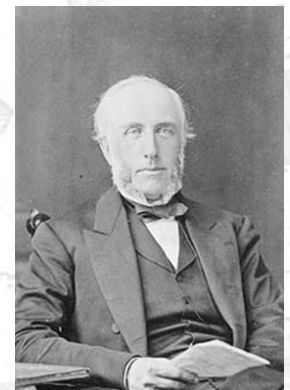
Thomas D'Arcy McGee

Thomas D'Arcy McGee began his political career as an anti-British activist, and worked closely with George Brown but eventually joined Macdonald's cabinet. McGee's speeches during diplomatic missions to Atlantic Canada confirmed his place at the Charlottetown and Québec conferences. He denounced the Fenian Brotherhood, a militant group that advocated for the forcible American takeover of Canada from Britain, and was assassinated in 1868 by a Fenian sympathizer.



George Brown

George Brown, an opposition member to Macdonald. One of his major suggestions was a federal union of the British colonies north and west of the United Province of Canada. He favoured representation by population and worked towards Confederation throughout the conferences. Brown was persuaded to favour a federal view of Canada, with the provinces maintaining some control of their own affairs.



Confederation: Why It Still Matters

The Government has announced that the themes for the 150th Anniversary of Confederation will be

- Diversity and Inclusiveness,
- Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples,
- Environment, and
- Youth

Nowhere is either

- **Confederation**

OR

- **Canadian history
a theme.**



Canada's Confederation is celebrated every year to commemorate Canadian history and values.

Canadians Don't Know Their Basic History

The public's understanding of events in Canadian history is far from perfect. While Canadians express a desire to know their history better, and given a chance they do, they still need the opportunity to learn. One 2014 poll commissioned by Historica Canada found that

- 28% of respondents could not identify 1867 as the year of Confederation
- 26% could not correctly identify the first Prime Minister as Sir John A. Macdonald

A study of young Canadians in 2007 also found that their basic knowledge of Canadian history was declining compared to 10 years prior. At the time of the study, eight in ten Canadians from age 18-24 failed a basic Canadian history test covering topics like Confederation, famous Canadians, and Canada's role in the First World War.

Our History Helps Us Understand Our Future

Confederation was an act of unification – of provinces, of languages, and of people – around a single goal. The events leading to Confederation in 1867 encouraged the British colonies across North America to overcome differing interests and unify around shared values. Canada's identity today builds on these values, such as respect for cultural differences and the rule of law. An understanding of the history of Confederation and the stories of small communities across the country shows reveals who we are today. As Canada approaches the 150th Anniversary of Confederation, there is an occasion to learn more about our heritage while looking towards the future.