

## Chapter

## 5

## Confederation Won

## Celebration!

**With the first dawn of this summer morning, we hail the birthday of a new nation. A united British America takes its place among the nations of the world.**

—George Brown

It is 1 July 1867. The church bells start to ring at midnight. Early in the morning guns roar a salute from Halifax in the east to Sarnia in the west. Bonfires and fireworks light up the sky in cities and towns across the new country. It is the birthday of the new Dominion of Canada and the people of Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia are celebrating.

Under blue skies and sunshine, people of all religious faiths gather to offer prayers for the future of the nation. In Toronto, there is a great celebration at the Horticultural Gardens. The gardens are lit with Chinese lanterns. Fresh strawberries and ice cream are served. A concert is followed by dancing. Tickets are 25¢; children's tickets are 10¢. In another part of the city, a huge ox is roasted and the meat is distributed to the poor.

In Québec, boat races on the river, horse races, and a cricket match are held. In the Maritimes, families travel to the sea for a day of swimming and a supper of salads, cold meat, pies, and cakes. Almost everywhere, there is the feeling that this day is just the beginning of great things for Canada.

But in some parts of the new Dominion, the mood is not one of rejoicing. Anti-Confederationists display flags at half-mast. They wear black clothes as a sign of

mourning. A likeness of Dr. Tupper is burned side-by-side with a rat in Nova Scotia. In New Brunswick, a newspaper carries a death notice on its front page: "Died—at her residence in the city of Fredericton, The Province of New Brunswick, in the 83rd year of her age."



### Predicting

1. Confederation has been achieved. What questions do you think still need to be answered?
2. How do you think the new country of Canada will deal with these challenges?

## How Will the Country Be Governed?

Canada East, Canada West, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have decided on Confederation. But there is still much work to be done. The British North American colonies still belong to Britain. The union cannot be official until the British Parliament approves it.

### The London Conference

Sixteen delegates from Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia journey to London, England. Throughout the winter of 1866-67, these Fathers of Confederation work with British officials. They are drafting a Confederation bill they can present to the British Parliament. The major issue is to decide how the new country will be governed.



Politicians discuss plans for the new country of Canada at the London Conference.

### Models for Government

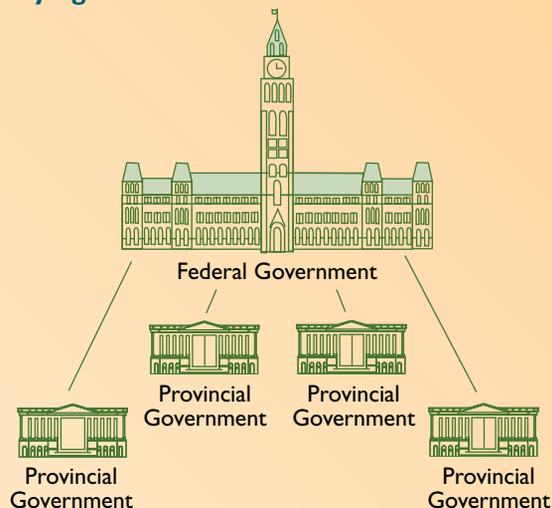
In building the new nation, the Fathers of Confederation have two models they can copy: the British and the American. They choose what they believe are the best features from the governments of both countries.

#### Ideas from the American Model

- Canada will have a **federal system**. That is, there will be a central government to deal with matters of concern to the whole nation. But each province (like each state in the US) will also have its own government to deal with matters of local concern.
- Britain is not a federal union; it has only a central government. For governing a large country such as the United States or Canada, a federal union is considered better. Canada's federal government may also be referred to as the "central," the "national," or the "Dominion" government.
- The central government will be more powerful than the provincial governments. In their federal system, the Americans gave wide powers to the states and limited powers to the central government. They stated that any powers not mentioned in their Constitution automatically belonged to the states. The bloody Civil War that had just ended arose out of the

issue of the rights of individual states. In 1864, John A. Macdonald said:

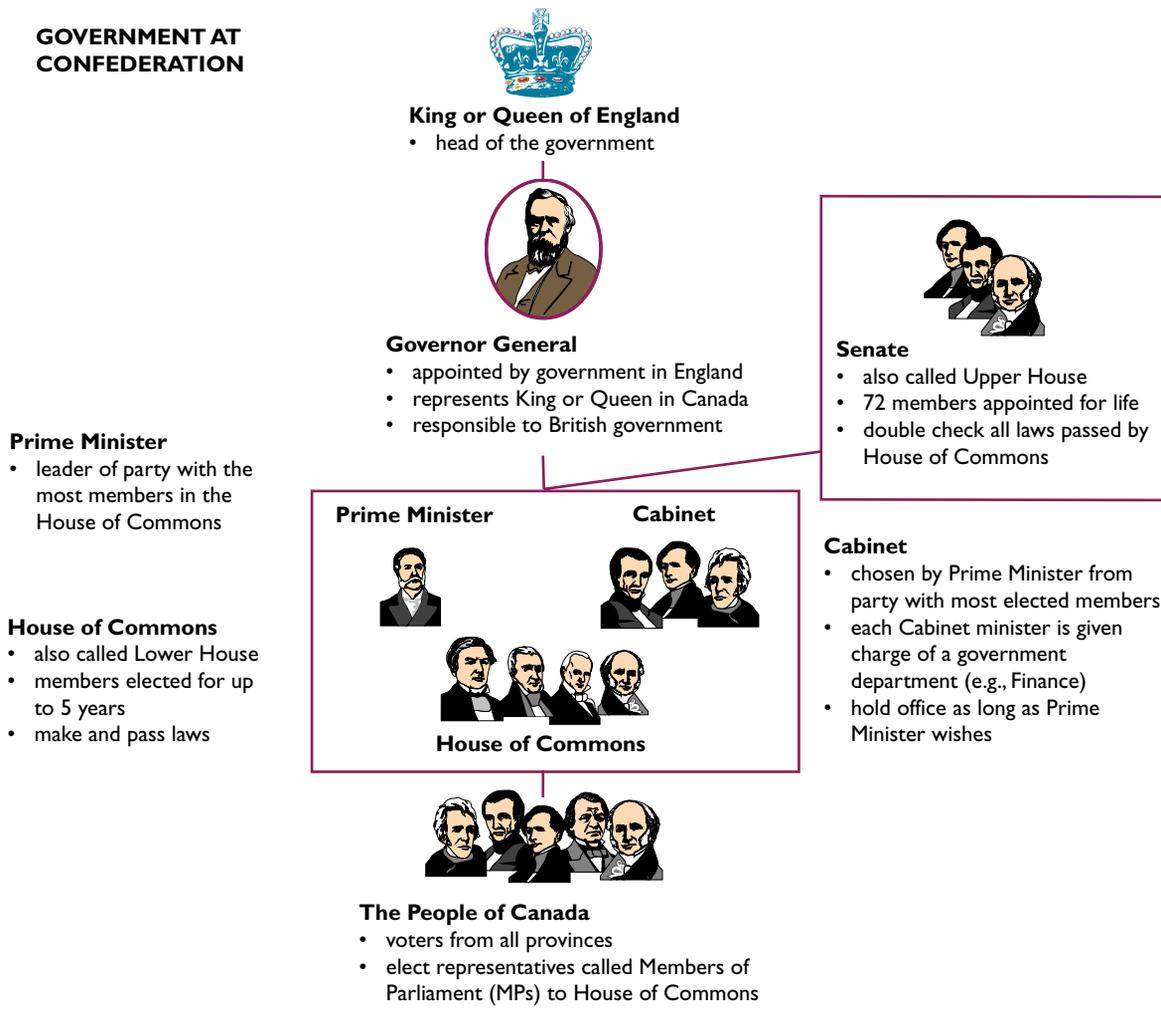
**In framing the Constitution, care should be taken to avoid the mistakes and weaknesses of the United States system. Their primary error was reserving for the states all powers not given to the central government. We must reverse this. . . . A strong central government is essential to the success of the experiment we are trying.**



### Ideas from the British Model

- No one is talking about independence from Britain. The Queen will be the head of the Canadian government. But as in Britain, she is required to follow the advice of the elected members of government.
- Canada will have a parliamentary government fashioned on the British system with a **House of Commons** made up of representatives elected by the people.
- There will be representation by population. Provinces will elect members to the House of Commons on the basis of their populations. Québec is guaranteed 65 members to ensure that it will not be swamped by an English-speaking majority.
- The government will be responsible to the people. The prime minister and the cabinet will be members of the political party that has the largest number of elected members in the House of Commons. If they lose the support of a majority of members, they can be voted out of power.
- Like the House of Lords in Britain, Canada will have a second house of Parliament. It will be called the **Senate**. The name is taken from the American system. It will have 72 members appointed for life—24 from Québec, 24 from Ontario, and 24 from the Maritimes. Its main function is to double-check all laws passed by the elected House of Commons.

### GOVERNMENT AT CONFEDERATION



## A New Constitution

In the spring of 1867, the **British North America Act** is introduced in the British Parliament. The act is built on the Seventy-Two Resolutions worked out at the Québec Conference. The fact that the Confederation idea is supported by people of different political parties in Canada impresses the British. There is little debate in the British parliament. The act passes quickly without any major changes. It is said that the British parliament is more interested in the debate on a new dog tax which followed.

Queen Victoria puts her royal signature on the act and 1 July 1867 is proclaimed as the day it will come into effect. Today, the act is known as the **Constitution Act 1867**. It creates the Dominion of Canada uniting four provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the two Canadas, now Ontario and Québec.

Anti-Confederationists from Nova Scotia led by Joseph Howe are also in London that

winter. They fight the Confederation scheme right to the last minute. But their attempt to stop it is hopeless.

## The Division of Powers

The Constitution Act 1867 established the new country of Canada. A **constitution** also sets out all the rules, laws, and practices for how the government of a country will run. Some parts of the constitution are written. Other parts are informal and unwritten. They are based on customs and traditions.

One of the main aspects of the Constitution Act 1867 was to set out the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. The Fathers of Confederation purposely limited the powers of the provinces. They were determined to have a strong central government. The central government could disallow any law passed by the provinces. Also, any powers not set out would belong to the central government.





### Provincial Government Powers

- education
- property rights
- mines and forests
- licensing of businesses
- hospitals and asylums
- raising money by taxes (such as a provincial sales tax) for provincial purposes
- provincial courts and prisons



### Federal Government Powers

- trade
- defence
- foreign affairs
- banks
- shipping
- fisheries
- criminal law
- taxation
- postal services
- Aboriginal peoples and lands reserved for them

### Other Issues

The Constitution Act also covered other issues of government. It promised that an Intercolonial Railway connecting the St. Lawrence River with Halifax would be started within six months and it allowed for other provinces to join the Dominion in the future.

In terms of finances, the central government took over all the debts of the provinces and most of the provinces' sources of income, such as customs duties. Therefore, every province was given a sum of money or subsidy by the central government every year. The amount was based on the population of the province.

### French Canadian Rights

The Fathers of Confederation were careful to protect the rights of the French-speaking people of Québec. The French would keep their own province, language, religion, schools, and civil law. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant schools were guaranteed. English and French languages were to be used in the central Parliament, in the Parliament of Québec, and in federal courts.

Canadian historians cannot agree, however, on what the Fathers of Confederation intended. Were they limiting the French language to Québec? Or, did they foresee a Canada of the future being fully bilingual (two languages) and bicultural (French and English)?

### Women and Aboriginal Peoples

While French language and rights were protected, other groups in the country were not taken into account. Women had no say in the workings of government during this period of history. They did not have the right to vote. This would soon become a major issue for the new country.

Aboriginal peoples also had no part in the formation of the country or its government. They were not seen as independent nations with the right to negotiate for their own concerns. Instead, they were placed under the authority of the federal government. A federal department was created to manage the way Aboriginal peoples would live. But Aboriginal peoples saw themselves as independent nations with rights over their lands. Aboriginal peoples would present another challenge to the new country of Canada.

### Other Minority Groups

There were other minority groups in the new country as well. These included Black settlers in the Maritimes and Ontario, German-speaking settlers in Nova Scotia and around what is now Kitchener, Ontario. Ukrainian people in the Red River Settlement and Chinese communities on the west coast would also soon become a part of the new country. How would the new country deal with these groups?

## Ushering In a New Country

Meanwhile, at home in Canada, people were celebrating the birth of the nation. Through the crowded streets of Ottawa, the new prime minister, John A. Macdonald, and his government made their way to the Parliament Buildings. There Canada's first governor-general, Lord Monck, was sworn into office.

A royal proclamation was read declaring that the British North America Act was now in effect. Cheers went up for Canada and Queen Victoria. Banners everywhere proclaimed "Good Luck to Confederation!" and "Bienvenue à la Nouvelle Puissance!"

## Naming the New Country

What would the new country be called? The *Toronto Globe* invited its readers to submit names and the newspaper received many suggestions. Among them were: British Esfiga (from the first letters of English, Scottish,

French, Irish, German, and Aboriginal), Britannia, Cabotia, Laurentia, New Britain, Nigarentia, Transatlantica, Albertania, Canadia, Tuponia, and Kingdom of Canada.

Macdonald and his friends would have preferred to call the new country "Kingdom of Canada." They said this would emphasize that the country was a monarchy, loyal to the Queen. But Britain did not want to cause an



## Fast Forward

### Canada's Centennial 1967



Expo '67 in Montréal

The year 1967 was a special one for Canada. On 1 July 1967, Canada celebrated its 100th birthday. Thousands of people gathered on the lawn in front of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. At midnight, the bells in the Peace Tower chimed "O Canada". As the anthem ended, red, white, blue, and green fireworks lit up the sky. People cracked open champagne and danced in the streets. All across the country Canada's 100th birthday was celebrated with parades, picnics, and special events. There was scarcely a city, town, or village that did not dedicate a new Centennial park, arena, or library that year. Canada also hosted an international world's fair in Montréal called Expo '67. Over 60 nations participated to help celebrate our centennial. The national pavilions housed everything from cultural and historical displays to the latest in modern technology.

uproar with Canada's large southern neighbour, the United States. During the American Revolution, the United States abandoned the British monarchy. They became a Republic governed by a president. They would not take kindly to a new British "kingdom" on their northern border.

Leonard Tilley suggested "**Dominion**" for Canada. He got the name from a verse in Psalm

72 of the Bible that states, "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." The Fathers of Confederation agreed that this verse described the new nation. They hoped that soon Canada would stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the St. Lawrence River to the end of land on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

## Fast Forward

### Canada's Parliament Buildings



Two years after Ottawa was chosen as the capital of the Province of Canada in 1857, work began on Canada's Parliament Buildings. They were built of grey limestone high on the cliffs overlooking the Ottawa River. Broad lawns, where parades could be held, stretched down to the street. In 1866, the Assembly of the Province of Canada met there for the first time. In 1867 when Confederation was won, the Parliament Buildings immediately became the seat of the new government of the Dominion of Canada.

In 1916, there was near disaster. The Centre Block was struck by fire. Seven people were killed in the blaze. Only the northwest wing and the library remained standing. If a worker had not closed the library's iron

doors, thousands of precious books could have been destroyed.

Rebuilding began even though Canada was involved in World War I at the time. The new building was completed in 1922. The Peace Tower was finished in 1927 and was built to mark the end of World War I. The tower has a carillon, a series of 53 bells. The Memorial Chamber on the third floor of the Tower was built to honour the dead from World War I. Today it pays tribute to all Canadians who lost their lives for freedom and peace in wars since 1866. Special Confederation celebrations with fireworks and parades are held on the grounds of the Parliament Buildings every Canada Day on 1 July. Today, the Parliament Buildings are one of Canada's most distinctive symbols.

*You can tour the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa or do an on-line tour on the Internet at [http://w3.pwgsc.gc.ca/ppd\\_dcp/virtual\\_e.html](http://w3.pwgsc.gc.ca/ppd_dcp/virtual_e.html)*



## Tech Link

### The Dawn of Photography

A stereoview is a twin photo with two images side-by-side. The pictures have been taken from a slightly different viewpoint. This stereoview shows the break-neck steps in Québec City dated 1874.

Photography was one of the most important inventions of the 19th century. The first photograph in Canada was taken in Québec City in 1840. Most were studio portraits of politicians, royalty, or the wealthy. People had to stay still for a full 60 seconds for the image to set.

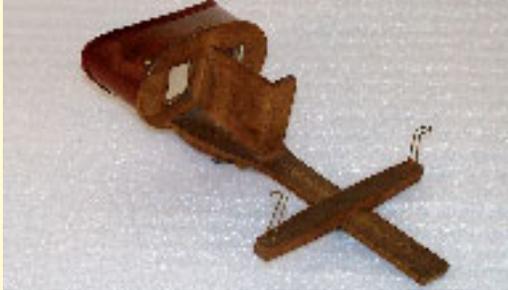
William Notman in Montréal was one of Canada's best known early photographers. In the 1850s, some photographers became more adventurous and went outside the studios. On an expedition to the Assiniboine and

Saskatchewan areas in 1858, H. L. Hime was the first to take photographs of the largely unknown west.

Photographs also quickly became a form of entertainment. By the middle of the century, the sale of stereoviews was a big business. Stereoviews were like television in the 19th century. People could relax in their parlours or living rooms and be transported around the world. All they needed was a box of stereoviews and a hand-held stereoscope.



There were thousands of views for sale, usually in boxed sets. You could buy views of towns and cities. You could see their famous buildings, streets, and architectural features. With stereoviews you could visit exotic places where you could never go in person. There were pictures of kings and queens, politicians, and opera stars. Sets of cards showed what it



A stereoscope is a special viewer. The right eye sees only the right photo. The left eye sees only the left photo. By sliding the card along the bar of the viewer, the picture springs to life in three dimensions.

was like mining coal underground or building a bridge high above ground. There were pictures illustrating nursery stories to entertain children.

With the coming of movies, stereoviewing declined as entertainment. But today people still collect stereoview cards. They provide an interesting picture of life in earlier times.

1. What can we learn from stereoviews about living in the 19th century?
2. You can see the stereoviews in 3D without the use of a stereoscope. Try it. Look at the photos on the previous page from a distance of about 30 cm. Allow your eyes to unfocus. Then, let the two images drift together. Watch one significant item in the view until the images drift together.

Carefully bring the images back into focus, without separating them. The 3D effect will be immediate. All it takes is a little practice. For more help and to see more Canadian stereoviews, visit a collector's site on the Internet at [www.stereoviews.com/canada.html](http://www.stereoviews.com/canada.html).

3. Find out more about some of Canada's early photographers such as William Notman and H. L. Hime.

## **Skill Building:** Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

Imagine there is a bank holdup. An eyewitness in the bank got a good look at the robbers. A detective is trying to calm him down and get the facts. The eyewitness describes the young man who waved the gun—about 17, tall, thin, and with curly blonde hair. He was wearing a green and white striped shirt, blue jeans, and sneakers.

As he tells the story, the witness becomes

angry. He complains about increasing youth crime. The detective sighs and puts down his pencil. Patiently, he says to the man, "Just the facts please. We all have our own opinions. But if we're going to catch this robber, I need the facts." A detective listening to an eyewitness has to sort out what is fact and what is opinion.

A **fact** is something that is true. You can do research to discover whether it is true. An **opinion** may or may not be true. It is based on a person's thoughts or feelings and his or her interpretation of the evidence.

Opinions are not bad, but they are only one person's point of view. For example, someone tells you that John A. Macdonald was one of the Fathers of Confederation. This is a fact. If however, he or she says John A. Macdonald was the *most important* Father of Confederation, this is an opinion. Others could offer the opinion that George Brown or George Cartier were the most important for just as good reasons.

Whether you are reading a book or magazine, listening to a politician make a speech, or watching television, you must be able to distinguish between fact and opinion.

### Challenge Yourself!

Decide whether each of the following statements are facts or opinions.

- I. a) Sir John A. Macdonald was Canada's first prime minister.
- b) The Fathers of Confederation wanted to limit the use of the French language in Canada to Québec.
- c) Joseph Howe cannot be considered a Canadian hero.
- d) The provincial governments should have been given more power at Confederation.

e) Prince Edward Island was right not to join Confederation in 1867.

f) D'Arcy McGee was the only Father of Confederation to be assassinated.

g) Canada was still a British colony after Confederation in 1867.

h) The Fenians were one factor that led to Confederation.

2. Hold a Great Challenge Match. Work with a partner to get ready. Select 20 statements from this unit. Draw a chart in your notebooks like the one below. With your partner, decide whether each statement is fact or opinion and place it in the correct column.

Facts	Opinions

Now you are ready for the Match. Hold your Match in front of the class. Challenge another pair of students to correctly identify each of your statements as either fact or opinion. You will have to identify their statements. If there is a disagreement over who is right, let the audience decide.

## Activities

### Understanding Concepts

- I. Add these new terms to your *Factfile*.

federal system

House of Commons

Senate

British North America Act

Constitution Act 1867

constitution

kingdom

dominion

fact

opinion

2. a) Explain how the new government of Canada had representation by population.  
b) How was it responsible government?
3. The Constitution Act 1867 set out the powers of the federal and provincial governments. Which government received the greatest powers? Why?
4. Why did the Fathers of Confederation choose the name “Dominion of Canada?”

### Digging Deeper

5. **CHART** People, events, attitudes, and geography could help or hinder the cause of Confederation. Create a two-column chart in your notebooks. Label one column “Factors that helped Confederation” and the other column “Factors that worked against Confederation.” Place each of the following factors in the correct column. Be prepared to defend your choices.
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joseph Howe</li> <li>• fear of a Fenian invasion</li> <li>• need for a railway to the Pacific</li> <li>• George Brown</li> <li>• the geography of the Canadian Shield</li> <li>• feelings of loyalty to Britain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• larger population in Canada West than in Canada East</li> <li>• George Cartier</li> <li>• the bloody American Civil War</li> <li>• the British Government</li> </ul>
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6. **DIAGRAM** The Fathers of Confederation chose parts of the American and British systems of government for Canada. Draw a diagram to illustrate what features were taken from each system.
7. **TIMELINE** Develop a timeline to record the events that led to Confederation beginning with the plans of the coalition government in Canada in 1864 and ending with the celebrations on 1 July 1867. Illustrate your timeline.

### Making New Connections

8. **INVESTIGATE** If your town or city is older than Confederation, try to find out how the birth of Confederation was celebrated (or mourned). Local libraries and old newspapers will help you. The 1 July 1867 issue of the *Toronto Globe* is available from *The Globe and Mail*, Education Department. Create a mural depicting the event.
9. **INTERVIEW/CREATE** Find out how Canada’s Centennial was marked in your community. Talk to your teachers, parents, aunts, uncles and others for their memories of the events. How was the Centennial celebrated? Was a library, school, recreation centre, or other building constructed to mark the year? Create a poster board display with quotations, pictures, facts, and other information you find about 1967 in your community.
10. **CREATE** How do you think Confederation should be remembered today? Decide on a key idea you want to focus on and then design a poster, medalion, stamp, web page, sculpture, collage or other work of art to express it.