

#1

The need for constitutional change

Excerpt from a newspaper article published on July 14, 1859 in The Montréal Daily Transcript.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

The Montréal Daily Transcript July 14, 1859

We are not a homogeneous [the same] people We find now no greater fusion or blending of feeling and interest than at the commencement [beginning] of the experiment [1841 Act of Union]. In all matters of legislation and government, the French seek to advance their own interests, without any care for Upper Canada, and the British of Upper Canada, in like manner, study what will be of benefit, not of the whole Province, but of their own section of it We do not see how, on the survey of the history of the past eighteen years, the conclusion can be avoided that some change in our constitutional system must be made, in order to save Canada from going further on the downward career to helpless embarrassment.

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#2

Fusion of the races

Political cartoon entitled “Fusion of the Races,” published in La Scie a humor newspaper in 1864. The cartoon depicts Canada West reformer George Brown ‘stirring the pot’.



FUSION DES RACES

Hou, Charles and Cynthia. Great Canadian political cartoons, 1820–1914. Vancouver: Moody’s Lookout Press, 1997. Pg. 6. Courtesy of Moody’s Lookout Press

#3

A plea for stronger leadership

Excerpt from an editorial published on June 16, 1864 in the Québec Daily News.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Québec Daily News
June 16, 1864

The politics of the country are again in a state of chaos. Another Ministerial crisis—the fourth within two years—has taken place, and judging from the disposition and temper of the two political parties into which the Legislature is so equally divided, there will likely be no end of them ... What the result of the present Ministerial crisis may be, we cannot say. It may end in dissolution, or in a coalition of the more moderate elements on each side of the House Everyone feels that a strong Government is wanted; that an infusion of a new element in the Councils of the Province is desirable. Let us have it as speedily as possible.

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#4

A multi-headed monster

Cartoon, published in 1864 depicts G.E. Cartier atop the Confederation monster, while Canada West pro-Confederationist George Brown is in the top left-hand corner.

LA CONFEDERATION!!!



**PRIMARY
SOURCE**
Canada East
and Confederation

Hou, Charles and Cynthia. Great Canadian political cartoons, 1820–1914. Vancouver: Moody's Lookout Press, 1997. Pg. 7. | Courtesy of Moody's Lookout Press

#5

Cartier's speech to the Legislative Assembly

Excerpt from a speech given by George-Etienne Cartier to the Legislative Assembly on February 7, 1865.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

George-Etienne Cartier to the Legislative Assembly
February 7, 1865

Some entertained the opinion that it was necessary to have British North American Confederation to prevent absorption (being absorbed) into the vortex of American Confederation (the United States). Such parties were mistaken. We knew the policy of England towards us—that she was determined to help and support us in any struggle with our neighbours. The British provinces, separated as at present, could not defend themselves alone, and the question resolved itself into this: shall the whole strength of the empire be concentrated into Prince Edward Island, or Canada, as the case may be, in case of a war with the United States—or shall the provinces be left to fight single-handed, disunited?

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#6

The question

Political Cartoon published in Le Perroquet [The Parrot], a political/humor magazine in February 1865.

PRIMARY SOURCE
Canada East and Confederation



“The question”

Chief cook: My dear friends, with what kind of sauce would you like to be prepared? Confederation or annexation?

Turkeys: Neither one nor the other!

Cook: You are avoiding the question.

Hungry neighbour [Abraham Lincoln]: I will end up eating both the cooks and the turkey.

Hou, Charles and Cynthia. Great Canadian political cartoons, 1820–1914. Vancouver: Moody’s Lookout Press, 1997. Pg. 10. | Courtesy of Moody’s Lookout Press

#7

L.A. Olivier speaks to the Legislative Assembly

Excerpt from a speech given to the Legislative Assembly on February 13, 1865.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

L.A. Olivier to the Legislative Assembly February 13, 1865

Public opinion is composed especially of that of the industrial and commercial classes, and it is the interest of those classes to favour Confederation. But let us consider whether the interests of those classes is ours (French-Canadian) also. I consider that our present political course should be to see to the interests of the agriculture, the trade, and the industry of our country before labouring to build up that of English traders and artisans. If by Confederation we unite provinces, the inhabitants of which find it their interest to have a very low tariff adopted, it might very well happen the agricultural interest of Canada might not find itself so well off, and in such a case what would be the result? The result would be that we should very soon have an enormous debt, and that, should the customs revenue not suffice to meet it and provide for the expenditure, the deficit (remaining cost) would have to be made up by means of direct taxation ... Confederation would appear to me to be very costly, for money is scattered on all sides in handfuls.

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#8

La Minerve editorial

Excerpt is from an editorial published in La Minerve newspaper on February 18, 1865.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

La Minerve
February 18, 1865

Canada's situation is quite exceptional. But if the dangers are great, if we absolutely must assume the expense of an army and an intercolonial railway, if we are to avoid eventual annexation and seek new markets for our products a happy coincidence enables us to obtain all these results without ruining our financial position nor endangering a single one of our national rights. But these circumstances will not last forever.

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#9

Henri Joly speaks to the Legislative Assembly

Excerpt from a speech given by French-Canadian politician, Henri Joly, to the Legislative Assembly on February 20, 1865.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Henri Joly to the Legislative Assembly February 20, 1865

What then are the aspirations of the French-Canadians? I have always imagined, indeed I still imagine, that they centre in one point, the maintenance of their nationality as a shield destined for the protection of the institutions they hold most dear. For a whole century this has ever been the aim of the French-Canadians; in the long years of adversity they have never for a moment lost sight of it; surmounting (overcoming) all obstacles, they have advanced step by step towards its attainment, and what progress have they not made?

... We possess all the elements of a nationality. But a few months ago, we were steadily advancing towards prosperity, satisfied with the present and confident in the future of the French-Canadian people. Suddenly discouragement, which had never overcome us in our adversity, takes possession of us We must adopt a new nationality, adopt a new one, greater and nobler, we are told than our own, but then it will no longer be our own. And why? Because it is our inevitable fate, against which it is of no use to struggle Let us not give to the world the sad spectacle (sight) of a people voluntarily resigning its nationality

I object to the proposed Confederation, first, as a Canadian, without reference to origin, and secondly, as a French-Canadian. From either point of view, I look upon the measure as a fatal error; and, as a French-Canadian, I once more appeal to my fellow-countrymen, reminding them of the precious inheritance confided to their keeping

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History Docs



#1

English Protestants in Canada East

Excerpt from booklet written by journalist Jean Charles Bonenfant, published in 1980 as part of a series of historical booklet created by the Canadian Historical Association.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

At the birth of Confederation, the English and Protestant Canadians of Québec did not wish to risk their position. They represented nearly a quarter of the population, but their real power was more considerable than their number, for, in the cities of Québec and Montréal, they were the masters of industry, commerce, and finance, and they dominated the Eastern Townships. They were afraid that, under the new constitution, they would lose their privileged position, and that they would henceforth be at the mercy of the French-Canadian Catholic majority in the future local legislature.

Bonenfant, Jean Charles. The French-Canadians and the birth of Confederation: Historical booklet No. 21. Ottawa: Love Printing Service Ltd, 1980. Pg. 9.

#2

Cartier and Confederation

Excerpt from a book written by historian Christopher Moore entitled *How the fathers made a deal*, published in 1997.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Cartier feared that, once out of the union, Québec would be ripe for annexation to the United States and rapid assimilation. Cartier's phobia about American republicanism and the tyranny of the majority was one of the wellsprings [root causes] of his fervent devotion to the British monarchy. In the United States, he argued, Québec would be consigned to the fate of Louisiana, where the French language and the Catholic faith were already considered as good as lost

Accepting Upper Canada's demand for rep-by-pop, Québec would lose the precious half-share in the national Parliament that had become its bulwark [protection] against hostile or assimilation policies. But in a federal union, Québec might see the union preserved, and still shelter its vital interests.

Moore, Christopher. 1867: *How the fathers made a deal*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1997. Pg. 142-143.

