

Confederation – Canada Becomes a Country

Upper and Lower Canada

After the England took over New France, New France was called **Lower Canada**. The other part was called **Upper Canada**. Both parts were located along the **St. Lawrence River**. Eventually Lower Canada became **Quebec** and Upper Canada became **Ontario**.

There were conflicts in Upper Canada and Lower Canada because there were rich people who received land from the King of England and King of France. The rich French people were called **Chateau Clique** and the rich English people were called **Family Compact**. Both rich English and French were in power in the governments of Upper and Lower Canada. Eventually the regular settlers felt the government was unfair and started a **rebellion**. A rebellion occurs when people don't follow the current rules and want to make new ones. A rebellion usually happens when people want change. There is usually fighting and violence during a rebellion, and sometimes a big war breaks out. The rebellion was called the **Rebellions of Upper and Lower Canada**.

After the Rebellions of Upper and Lower Canada, England decided to combine the two governments of Upper and Lower Canada into one government. Together, Upper and Lower Canada made of the **Province of Canada**. Upper Canada was renamed to **Canada West**, and Lower Canada was renamed to **Canada East**. Remember, there was no country yet. There were only colonies. Province of Canada was a colony made up of two combined colonies (Upper and Lower Canada). New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland were colonies called the **Atlantic colonies**. They weren't provinces yet. British Columbia was also a colony.

Factors Leading to Confederation

Why did Canada become a country? There are a few reasons or factors that helped Canada become a country. Some factors or reasons come from outside the colonies called **external factors**. External means the outside. Some factor or reason come from inside the colonies called **internal factors**. Internal means the inside.

United States of America as a Threat

After the Fall of New France, England had control over North America. There was a group of English settlers who didn't want to stay a part of England. They had a war with England and won. After they won they formed the United States of America in **1776**. The other group of English settlers who did want to stay a part of England were called **loyalists**, and moved to the English colonies. In 1861, the north and south parts of the United States of America had a war with each other, which is called a **civil war**. The North declared war on the South because the South wanted to keep black slaves but the North wanted slavery to stop.

This war made the British colonies fear that the United States of America might invade them. (This actually happened unsuccessfully to the British colonies in 1812 called the War of 1812.) Also, Americans began to believe that they should be in power over all of North America. This

meant that Americans wanted to take over the British colonies. This belief is called **Manifest Destiny**. The British colonies, that included the Province of Canada, felt threatened by the United States because of the American Civil War and their Manifest Destiny beliefs. A **threat** is something that might happen that may be dangerous.

Fenian Threat

The Americans were not the only threat. There was a group of Irish called the **Fenians**, who wanted to have their own land, separate from England. **In 1866**, the Fenians actually tried to invade New Brunswick because they wanted that land to be Irish. This was another factor or reason for the British Colonies to unite and become a country.

England as a Factor

England did not want to be responsible for taking care of the colonies anymore. If North America was attacked, England had to send its military to protect its colonies. England did not want to spend their money or military to look after its North American colonies anymore. Someone would have to protect the colonies. If the colonies came together to form a country, then they would have their own military to defend themselves in case of outside attacks.

Up until this time, England took care of the Province of Canada and its other colonies since England needed this land for a source of food. England bought a great deal of the food that grew in North America, but now England did not want to buy their food only from its colonies. It also wanted to do business with other countries. So, if the colonies came together to form a country, then together they would make their business stronger.

One Railway

The British colonies did not have the best transportation system. They had many short railways spread across North America, which made it hard to ship materials or travel across Canada. The biggest railway called **The Grand Trunk Railway (GTR)** connected Quebec to Toronto, and many shorter railways branched out from the GTR. What they really needed was one large continuous railway that would connect the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. A lot of effort and money from all the colonies was needed to build one continuous railway. This could only happen if the colonies joined together to become a single country.

Province of Canada

The government of the Province of Canada was not working properly. A political deadlock occurs when a government is not working properly. This is what happened to the Province of Canada. The government the Province of Canada could not make any decisions or do anything because almost every two years, there was a new government. They needed to have a better way to make decisions. George Brown, John A. Macdonald, and George-Etienne Cartier agreed that they needed to find a better way for a government. They also wanted colonies like Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island to be a part of this new government.

Charlottetown Conference

The colonies had to do make changes since there were several external factors including, threats of being attacked or overtaken by the Americans and/or the Fenians and England no longer wanted to be responsible for protecting the colonies. In addition, there were several internal factors including, issues with the system of government and problems with the railroad. As a result, the leaders of the Province of Canada and the Atlantic colonies had an important meeting called the Charlottetown Conference to come up with a plan. The Charlottetown Conference was on September 1-9, 1864 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The men attending this important meeting were called delegates because they represented their colony. The Atlantic colonies wanted to talk about how to become stronger and the Province of Canada wanted all the colonies to unite and become one country with a new government. This new government would form a federal government which would govern the entire country and a provincial government for each of the provinces, that each colony would become. After the Province of Canada shared its ideas with the Atlantic colonies, delegates had to go back to their colonies to share the ideas. Each colony also needed time to think about what it wanted and why. A second meeting was needed and it would be held in Quebec one month later.

The Quebec Conference

On October 10-27, 1864, delegates met in Quebec. They talked about how much power the federal government would have compared to the provincial governments in Canada. John A. Macdonald wanted the federal governments to have more power, but the colonies wanted the provincial governments to have more power. In the end, the provincial governments had more power than John A. Macdonald wanted. They also decided that the federal government could collect taxes. The delegates wrote what they decided for their new country, but each colony could decide if they wanted to join the new country. Not everyone wanted to join a new country.

Confederation

In 1867, a document was written called the British North America Act. This document was signed in England and, as a result, Canada became a country. Canada was made up of four provinces: Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Canada East became Quebec, and Canada West became Ontario. This event is called Confederation or the Dominion of Canada. The first election for the new federal government occurred from August 7th to September 20, 1867. John A. Macdonald became the first prime minister of Canada and George-Etienne Cartier became the minister of the army. Confederation is celebrated every July 1st and today we call it Canada Day. The men who were responsible for Canada becoming a country were called the Fathers of Confederation.

Later on, Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island joined Confederation (joined Canada).

Opening Up of The West

The newly formed Canada made up of four provinces wanted the other colonies to join. This included the land that was west of Ontario. Most of the western land was occupied by First Nations People who were forced to move there after the European settlers occupied and formed their governments in the east. In western land, the First Nations People were able to continue to live the way they did before the Europeans came and took over their land. Now this western land was also going to be taken over. This big piece of western land was called **Rupert's Land**. The **Hudson's Bay Company** owned Rupert's Land where much hunting was done to obtain fur skins for business. The Hudson's Bay Company sold the fur skins. Also, the Europeans had guns and used them to kill many Buffalo for their furs in a very short period of time. These events hurt the First Nations People because too many Buffalo were being killed. The First Nations People needed the Buffalo for food and their way of life.

A group of First Nations People, called the Métis, a mix between First Nations People and French people, wanted a say in how they would become part of Canada. They had to fight to get attention and be noticed before Canada would listen to them. They had a very smart leader called Louis Riel. He was able to get Canada to promise them their own Métis land where they could keep their Métis language, culture, and way of life.

After Confederation

After Confederation, the provinces needed to make their plans a reality. Their plan was called the **National Policy**. The Fathers of Confederation hired Chinese men to build the Canadian Pacific Railway that would link the country from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.